

BASELINE STUDY REPORT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ALBANIAN STATE POLICE

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ALBANIAN
STATE POLICE**

DATA CENTRUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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**Swedish Support to the Ministry of Interior (Mol)/
Albanian State Police (ASP) on Community Policing**



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASP	Albanian State Police
GPD	General Police Directorate
RPD	Regional Police Directorate
PMT	Programme Management Team
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOLSAEO	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOH	Ministry of Health
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
NSGE-VAWDV	National Strategy on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
NPO	Non Profitable Organization
DV	Domestic Violence
PO	Protection Order
EPO	Emergency Protection Order
ESOMAR	European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research
F2F	Face-to-face
FG	Focus Group
IDI	In-depth interviews

DEFINITIONS

Domestic violence: Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, “On measures against violence in family relations” defines violence as “any act or omission of one person against another, resulting in violation of the physical, moral, psychological, sexual, social, and economic integrity.” In turn, domestic violence is defined as “any act of violence committed between persons who are or used to be in a family relation.”

Family Members: According to Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, family members include:

- a. Spouses, cohabitating partners, former spouses, and former cohabitating partners;
- b. Brothers, sisters, relatives of direct blood line, including adoptive parents and children;
- c. Spouses or cohabitating partners of persons indicated in paragraph b;
- d. Persons related by direct blood line, including parents and adoptive children of the spouse or of the cohabitating partner;
- e. Brothers and sisters of the spouse if these have been living together during the last 3 months; and
- f. Children of spouses or of cohabitating partners

Emotional abuse: undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem. This may include constant criticism, humiliation, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, degradation, and damaging one's relationship with his or her children.¹

Psychological abuse: includes causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; threats of abandonment; destruction of pets and property; threats to take away custody of the children; forcing isolation from family, friends, school and/or work; and denying access to money or economic support.²

Physical violence: includes, but is not limited to: scratching, pushing, shoving, grabbing, biting, choking, pinching, poking, hair-pulling, arm twisting, slapping, hitting, burning, stabbing, and strangling. Physical violence can include the use of one's physical size and strength, restraints, or weapons (e.g., gun, knife, or other object) to gain and maintain control over another person. Physical violence often causes some form of harm or injury, and can even result in death.³

Sexual violence: includes forcing, coercing, or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behaviour without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner. Sexual abuse is committed by intimate partners and family members within the context of marriage, dating relationships, and family.⁴

Victim is the person who has been subject to the above mentioned violence.

Perpetrator is the person who commits and/or is reported for domestic violence at the competent authorities.

1. Domestic Violence in Albania: a national population-based survey, INSTAT, March 2009 , pg.15

2. Loc.cit

3. Loc.cit

4. Loc.cit

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

DESK RESEARCH

I.1. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Data Centrum Research Institute on behalf of the Programme “Swedish Government Support to the Ministry of Interior / Albanian State Police on Community Policing” (2012-2015) has conducted a baseline survey on “Domestic Violence and Albanian State Police” during May-July 2012.

The Programme acknowledges and builds upon results achieved from previous/on-going assistance programmes like EU’s PAMECA III. It will contribute to progress in the priority areas selected by ASP for the implementation of their 7 year Strategy (2007-2013) and its Action Plan.

The Programme’s goal is to enhance the Community policing programme and

- i. to improve the ability of the ASP to provide security and safety in a manner consistent with the principle of service-delivery and
- ii. To increase trust in and willingness from individuals and communities to cooperate and actively work with the ASP to reduce crime.

The Programme will provide assistance in three areas:

1. Performance Management;
2. Partnerships / focus on Youth and Police Partnership; and
3. Domestic Violence.

I.2. INTRODUCTION TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PHENOMENON IN ALBANIA

Domestic violence is a worldwide phenomenon, which negatively affects the physical, psychological, economic and social integration, mainly of the most vulnerable groups of the society: women, children, and the elderly. This phenomenon, which is caused by different factors such as cultural traditions, with deep roots in the old patriarchal customs, unhealthy life situations, gender discrimination, unemployment, intergenerational family control, etc.; represents a growing concern for the Albanian society, government, and civil society organizations, as well as international donors that operate in the country.

Different studies show that it is difficult to measure the level and extent of domestic violence, because this phenomenon occurs within the family and it is considered as a family issue. Therefore, various studies estimate that domestic violence could be underreported, due to factors such as: stigma, fear of reprisals, cultural norms, domestic violence stereotypes, etc., and different facts and figures should be considered with caution as they do not provide clear information about the prevalence of domestic violence in the country.

The following include some facts and figures based on studies that describe the prevalence of domestic violence in Albania, forms of violence, profile of the victim and of the perpetrator; factors contributing to the existence and development of this phenomenon.

There has been conducted only one national survey on domestic violence by INSTAT with the support of UNDP and UNICEF. Based on this survey (fieldwork conducted in November-December 2007), out of 2590 women between 15 and 49 years of age surveyed, at least 56% experienced one form of domestic violence in their marriage or intimate relationships. 50.6% experienced emotional abuse in their marriage or intimate relationships; 39.1 % psychological abuse; 31.2% physical abuse, 12.7 % sexual abuse.¹ Furthermore, out of 991 children aged 10-14 years, 57.7% of the surveyed reported being physically battered by a family member.²

Another study on Violence against Children (UNICEF, 2006) involving 1,500 children, 1,500 parents and 1,500 teachers in eight districts of Albania, show a high prevalence of corporal punishment in home: 1 out of 2 kids

1. Domestic Violence in Albania: a national population-based survey, INSTAT, March 2009, pg.25

2. Ibid, pg. 51

admit that they have been subject of domestic violence when it's necessary.³

Based on the Demographic and Health Survey 2008-09, INSTAT states that three-fourths (75 percent) of Albanian children age 2-14 years have experienced some form of psychological or physical punishment.⁴

A report study about "Violence in the family and in communities with different ethnicities" (2008) conducted in the Districts of Vlora, Fier, Berat and Gjirokastra, with a total valid number of questionnaires of 426 involving women and men aged 15+ years old (202 completed by the community in general and 224 questionnaires by the Roma and Egyptian community), revealed that 41% of the Roma and Egyptian admit having experienced physical violence; 34% psychological violence and 25% socio-economic violence.⁵

There is no available data in regard to domestic violence prevalence amongst LGBT community. However, based on the in-depth interview with the ProLGBT association, the domestic violence amongst this community is more frequent towards males rather than females. Non acceptance of their sexual orientation within the family, strongly linked with the social pressure toward the whole family, is the main trigger for domestic violence against LGBT community members.

The forms of physical and psychological violence often interlink with each other or precede one another and, as a result, the majority of the victims experience those simultaneously being unable to distinguish one from the other.

Background of the victims and perpetrators

Various study reports revealed that the most violated family member is the female.

As mentioned in the "Report on Establishment and Effectiveness of Functioning of the Cross-Sector Referral System on Domestic Violence Cases, at the Local Level", 91% of the 204 cases registered in the electronic Data Collection System occurred in five municipalities (Shkodër, Vlora, Pogradec, Berat and Rrëshen) in the period of June-September 2009, showing evidence of violence against female family members.⁶

The data provided by the General Police Directorate, based on the official reported cases from 2009 to 2011, show that in 81% of 5396 reported cases of domestic violence, the victim is the female.

Based on the National Population-based survey on Domestic Violence, of the 2,590 women between 15 and 49 years of age, there were no significant differences across age group in regard to women's experiences with emotional or psychological abuse. However, there were significant differences across age groups in regard to women's experiences with physical and sexual violence. In particular, women 26 years of age and older were significantly more likely to report they were physically battered and/or sexually abused by a husband/intimate partner than women in the age groups 15 to 17 years, 18 to 21 years, and 22 to 25 years.⁷

Women from rural areas were significantly more likely to experience emotional abuse and physical violence by their husband/intimate partner than women from urban areas. No strong correlation was found among women's experiences with psychological abuse, physical violence, and/or sexual violence, and work status. Women who have completed higher education were significantly less likely to experience emotional abuse, psychological abuse, and physical violence by their husband/intimate partner. It is to note there were no significant differences based upon women's level of education in regard to women's experiences with sexual violence.⁸

According to the same survey, boys were significantly more likely than girls to be physically abused by their father/step-father than girls; whereas girls were significantly more likely than boys to be physically battered by their brother and/or sister.⁹ Boys and girls were equally likely to be physically battered by their mother/step-mother. Children in rural areas (66.4%) were more likely to be physically abused in comparison with children from urban areas (50.4%).¹⁰

3. Study on Violence Against Children, UNICEF, 2006, pg.7

4. Albania Demographic and Health Survey, INSTAT, March 2010, pg.152

5. A.Toska, A. Corrokaj, and E.Aliaj. Violence in the family and in communities with different ethnicities, 2008, pg.37-38

6. Report on "Establishment and Effectiveness of Functioning of the Cross-Sector Referral System on Domestic Violence Cases, at the Local Level", The Network against Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking, March 2010, pg.31

7. Domestic Violence in Albania: a national population-based survey, INSTAT, March 2009, pg.59

8. Ibid, pg.60

9. Loc.cit.

10. Ibid, pg.53

The data provided by the General Police Directorate, based on the official reported cases of domestic violence from 2008 to 2011, show that in 60% of 6218 reported cases of domestic violence, the victim is the wife of the perpetrator vs. 6% of husbands being the victim. In addition, in 7% of these cases the victims were the children and in 8% the parents.

The frequency of domestic violence against men is much lower compared to the violence against women.

There are no studies that could provide an overview of the violence towards elderly people and men. As we can conclude from the "Domestic violence: An overview of the current situation" report compiled by Gender Alliance for Development Centre in cooperation with MOLSAEO in 2006, the economic violence is the most spread violence towards elderly people and consists in: stealing money or other valuable objects through use of manipulation or force. Illnesses, physical disability, and isolation make this target group more vulnerable to economic violence and negligence. Furthermore, men are mainly affected by psychological violence and economic violence, taking into consideration that in most Albanian families the husband takes care of the economic household management. Psychological violence in general is expressed through the pressure that the society and family puts on the men to be the bread winner of the family.

According to the National Population Survey on Domestic violence, men of all educational levels commit acts of domestic violence against their wives and/or intimate partners. Analysis shows that women who had experienced different types of abuse (emotional, psychological, and physical) were more likely to report that their husbands had completed compulsory or secondary education.¹¹

The report study on "Violence in the family and in communities with different ethnicities" revealed that 79% of the Roma and Egyptian interviewees stated the main violator in the family was the husband and in 8% was the society.¹²

Various surveys have shown that there are three main levels of factors which stimulate domestic violence.

- i. Macro-level factors: influence of culture, economy, politics, high demographic movement, patriarchal tradition, etc.;
- ii. Micro-level factors (family level): family relations, previous history of abuse during childhood, growing in an abusive family environment, parenting style in the family, high number of children in one family, family education, etc.
- iii. Personal-level factors: mental health issues, various disorders of personality, alcohol and drug abuse, stress, low educational level, inferiority complex, low level of control, lack of empathy, emotional dependency, personal experiences in the family relations, etc.

1.3. DESCRIPTION OF THE OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1.3.1. Legal Framework

Ratified international conventions

Since the fall of communism in 1991, the Albanian government has taken serious efforts to ensure the compliance of the Albanian judiciary with international standards and has signed and ratified several international agreements regarding anti-discrimination and directly or otherwise to domestic violence.

The Republic of Albania is part of the following conventions of the United Nations and the Council of Europe:

- UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified on 4 October 1991.
- UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified on 4 October 1991.
- UN Convention on the Rights (UN CRC) of the Child ratified on 27 February 1992.
- The UN CRC provides clear authorization to the State to protect children from all forms of violence in

11. Domestic Violence in Albania: a national population-based survey, INSTAT, March 2009, pg.58-59

12. A.Toska, A. Corrokaj, and E.Aliaj. Violence in the family and in communities with different ethnicities, 2008, pg.30

the home and family, and establishes its role as final arbiter of child welfare in the domestic arena.

- UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ratified on 11 May 1994.
- UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ratified on 11 May 1994. The CEDAW has been considered as «an international bill of rights for women». It defines discrimination in a very substantive way, making clear that women have the right to full and equal enjoyment of all their human rights.
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the related Protocol to the Convention of the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ratified on 10 February 1996.
- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ratified on 10 February 1996.

In September 2000, the Albanian government endorsed the Millennium Declaration, where part of the declaration is also the Millennium Development Goals, one of which is also women equality and empowerment.

National legal framework

In 1998, the Albanian government adopted the new Constitution of the Republic of Albania. The Constitution advances principles of equality and non-discrimination, as well as protection and respect for human dignity, rights, and freedoms. For instance, Article 18/2 maintains, “Each and everyone shall be equal before law and nobody may be discriminated on basis of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, political, religious, and philosophical stand, economic, educational and social status.” Article 54/3 further maintains that every child has the right to be “protected from violence, maltreatment, exploitation and forced labour, especially under the minimum age of employment, which can harm the health, moral or put the child’s life or normal development at risk.”

Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 “On measures against violence in family relations” is designed to prevent and reduce domestic violence in all of its forms by appropriate legal measures, and to provide protection through legal means to family members who are subject to domestic violence.

The law has four main objectives as follows:

1. To set up a coordinated network of responsible authorities for protection, support, and rehabilitation of victims, mitigation of consequences, and prevention of domestic violence;
2. To orientate efforts for the establishment of responsible structures and authorities at the central and local level in support of victims and prevention of domestic violence;
3. To empower the judiciary in taking protection measures against domestic violence; and
4. To ensure/guarantee quick, affordable, and simple services to the victims of domestic violence provided by courts and other law enforcement agencies in compliance with the law.

The Domestic Violence Law has established a mechanism to provide victims of family violence with a protection order, which may be granted by a civil court on the petition of a victim of such violence. The court must hear the petition within 15 days. Also a provision for emergency (“immediate”) protection orders has to be issued within 48 hours by a court, if the abuser poses a “direct and immediate threat to the security, health or well-being” of the victim. The court must hold a further session within 20 days to decide whether to prolong or terminate the order.¹³

According to the Law “On measures against violence in family relations,” the issuance of a protection order or emergency protection order does not inhibit interested parties from also initiating criminal proceedings with regard to acts or omissions that are classified as criminal offences.

13. Amnesty International, Ending Domestic Violence in Albania: Next Steps, March 2010, pg. 4

Law No. 9914, dated 12.5.2008 "On some amendments to Law No.9669, dated 18.12.2006 'On measures against violence in family relations'" appointed the Ministry of Education and Science as another responsible authority to domestic violence.

The law was amended on 30.09.2010 with the Law No. 10 329, which includes further improvements such as:

- Obligation of the responsible authorities to ensure confidentiality of personal data and information provided from the victim;
- Issuance of a normative act for the establishment of a nationwide cross-referral system for cases of domestic violence. This system is legitimized with the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 334, date 17.02.2011 "On the establishment of a nationwide cross referral system for victims of domestic violence and its way of functioning".
- Legitimizing the Police/Prosecution to issue petitions for protection orders for minors.
- Definition of the minimum time frame (24 hours) for issuing emergency protection orders for minors;
- Exclusion of the plaintiff from the obligation to pay all court expenses; including state bailiff services;
- Definition of the procedure for free legal assistance for victims

In addition to the law, several subordinate legal acts, orders, documents from the line-ministries are in place to ensure the implementation of the law.

One of the most important subordinate legal acts in this regard is the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 334, dated 07.02.2011 "On the establishment of a nationwide cross referral system for victims of domestic violence and its way of functioning". This act defines the referral system which must be established in each and every municipality, and which consists in three levels:

a. *Steering committees*

which consist in representatives of various institutions such as municipality, police, district court, district prosecutor's office, education directorate, public health directorate, social services of the municipality and communes, bailiff's office, prefecture, mayor of commune, employment office, NPOs, centres / shelters for domestic violence victims, religious institutions which may provide services for the victims; and this committee is headed by the mayor of the municipality

b. *Interdisciplinary technical teams*

which consist in technical representatives of all institutions participating in the steering committee, and representatives of the child protection unit and local specialists for gender equality; and freelancers too, such as lawyers, psychologists, etc.

c. *Local coordinators*

for the referral of domestic violence cases, who are representatives of the social service office with local authorities (municipality / commune), and head of the interdisciplinary technical team at the same time.

Law No. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On Gender Equality" regulates key aspects of gender equality in all areas for an equal treatment between men and women.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has developed the *National Strategy on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2011-2015*, along with a National Action Plan. This strategy follows the previous one which covered the period 2007-2010.

The National Strategy is aimed at:

- Achieving gender equality through mainstreaming gender perspective into all aspects of developed and applied policies (i.e. equal participation of women and men in the social, economic, and political realms), with equal opportunities to enjoy all rights and to place their individual potential to the service of the society; and at
- Improving protection, performance of the judicial system, and support for victims of domestic violence,

as well as at focusing more specifically on prevention by tackling the root causes of domestic violence.

One of the strategic goals is the reduction of gender based violence where the main defined objectives and expected results include: 1) better legal framework for zero tolerance against violence; 2) improved culture against violence through awareness raising and education; 3) adequate measures and services for the victims of domestic violence; 4) specialists of state structures respond to and address the needs/rights of the victims and perpetrators; 5) data collection and monitoring system of gender based violence established.

Law No. 10.399, dated 17.03.2011 "On some amendments and additions to Law No. 9355 dated 10.3.2005 'On social services and assistance'" sanctions that violated women also have the right to withdraw the economic assistance payment in cases when they have PO/EPO, regardless if they are heads of families or not; the law also provides economic assistance when the spouses are in the process of divorce. Economic assistance for victims of domestic violence is benefited as long as PO/EPO is valid.

The Family Code of Albania also includes several articles relevant to domestic violence against a spouse and children. The Family Code addresses parental obligations and child rights in the family life, as well as child abuse and neglect. For instance, Article 62 provides that "the abuser spouse may be removed from the conjugal domicile." This article, however, has no other procedural provisions.

The Law No.8876, dated 4 April 2002 "On Reproductive Health" stipulates that every woman shall decide on her own free will and without any form of discrimination, pressure, or violence all issues related to her own sexuality, as well as sexual and reproductive health.

There are provisions in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania which can be used to address crimes related to domestic violence; some of those are relevant to child abuse and neglect. These crimes include, but are not limited to:

- Murder (76-83, 85)
- Threat (84)
- Serious intentional or non-serious intentional injury (Article 88/89)
- Other intentional harm (assault) as well as any other violent act constitute criminal contravention, when causing temporary work incapacity of up to nine days (Article 90)
- Serious or non-serious injury due to negligence (Article 91, 92)
- Interruption of pregnancy without the woman's consent (Article 93)
- Sexual intercourse (Article 100-108)
- Abandonment of minor children (Article 124)
- Denial of support (denial of necessary support for the living of children, parents or spouse, from the person who is obliged, through a court-order, to provide, constitute criminal contravention). (Article 125)
- Limitation of freedom to administer the income (Article 134/141)

The latest amendments to the Criminal Code, as per Law No. 23/2012, dated 1.3.2012; provide two important / specific figures of the domestic violence.

- Article 124/b defines/includes protection for minors even from their parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents and from legal custodian or any other person who is obliged to take care of him/her. This kind of offence is punished by imprisonment from three months up to two years.
- Article 130/a stipulates family violence by including physical assault or any other violent act; serious intimidation of death, serious injury or intentional injury caused by the husband/wife; ex husband or ex wife, co-habitant or ex cohabitant, or any other person who is family related with the author of crime, with the intention to violate physic, psycho-social, and economic integrity. As such, it is punished by up to five years imprisonment.

These important provisions have a specific subject, a family member who commits the violent act against another family member, and by this we may say that domestic violence is clearly stated in the criminal code.

Before the amendments to the Criminal Code, domestic violence incidents were possible to be processed as civil cases by making a petition for EPO/PO to the Courts and/or as a criminal case, in specific circumstances, by making a petition to the Prosecutor. Furthermore, the punishment in case of violation of a PO/EPO from the perpetrator was a fine or up to 2 years of imprisonment.

With the latest amendments to the Criminal Code, the domestic violence is a criminal act (article 130/a), therefore, the Prosecutor has the duty to immediately proceed with the case as soon as they get informed about it (from the victim, police or other sources). Now, even if the plaintiff withdraws the petition, the case can't be suspended. Furthermore, the violation of a protection order or emergency protection order constitutes a criminal offence in accordance with Article 320/321 of the Criminal Code (as amended); thus, the perpetrator can be arrested and sentenced with up to 2 years imprisonment (there is no more fine envisaged).

1.3.2. Institutional Framework

Law No.9669, dated 18.12.2006 organizes the following government institutions into a coordinated network of responsible authorities for protection, support, and rehabilitation of victims, mitigation of consequences, and prevention of domestic violence. The lead authority under this Law is the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Other responsible line authorities include the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, local government units, and judicial authorities (courts).

According to the law, duties of all responsible authorities are as follows:

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has the following duties:

- a. To develop and implement national strategies and programmes to offer protection and care to the victims of domestic violence;
- b. To fund and co-fund projects designed for the protection and consolidation of the family and for the care of victims of domestic violence;
- c. To assist the establishment of support structures and all of the necessary infrastructure to support and meet all the needs of the persons subject to domestic violence, including financial assistance as well as social and health services pursuant to the law;
- d. To organize training sessions on domestic violence with social service employees at any local government unit, police structures and employees of NPOs licensed to offer social services;
- e. To maintain statistical data on the level of domestic violence;
- f. To support and supervise the establishment of rehabilitation centres for domestic violence victims;
- g. To support and supervise the establishment of rehabilitation centres for the perpetrators of domestic violence;
- h. To license NPOs that will provide social services to victims and perpetrators.

Within the Ministry, the Directory of Equal Opportunities and Family Policies includes the following two sectors: Sector for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence and the Sector for the Protection of Children's Rights. State Social Service, under MOLSAEO, also provides services for violated women.

With the initiative and direction of MOLSAEO, a nationwide cross referral system has been established for the coordination of work among all responsible authorities at a central and local level for the prevention of domestic violence. According to MOLSAEO, so far, this mechanism has been established in 20 Municipalities.

In April 2011, with the initiative of MOLSAEO, the first National Centre for the treatment of victims of domestic violence was established. The establishment and functioning of this centre was supported by UNDP in the framework of One UN programme.

Ministry of the Interior has the following duties:

- a. To set up special units at the police departments to prevent and combat domestic violence;
- b. To train members of the police force to handle domestic violence cases

(More information about the structure and duties will be provided in the section 1.3.3 of this chapter.)

Ministry of Health has the following duties:

To set up the necessary structures to provide health care in domestic violence cases at the emergency units and at the healthcare centres in municipalities and communes, with a view to:

- a. Provide medical and psychological assistance to domestic violence victims at any time,
- b. Carry out necessary examinations at respective public health institutions at any time,
- c. Record domestic violence cases through relevant medical documentations, as approved by the Ministry of Health
- d. Provide the victim with the respective medical report
- e. Guide and refer the victim to other support and protection domestic violence services

The Ministry of Health has the following structures that also cover domestic violence issues: Public Health Directorate in the Ministry of Health, Public Health Directorate in Regions and healthcare centres and emergency health centres. A psycho-social and mental health service operates in the Regional Public Health Directorates and it consists of one medical doctor, one psychologist/social worker, and one nurse. This service provides psycho-social support also to the victims of domestic violence.

Ministry of Justice has the following duties:

- a. To train forensic experts in recognizing, diagnosing, evaluating and reporting on domestic violence and child abuse injuries;
- b. To train the bailiffs on their duty to serve protection orders immediately and to ensure their implementation under point 6 of Article 23 and to take appropriate action;
- c. To budget for free legal assistance mandated under this act and ensure a sufficient number of trained lawyers to provide said assistance.

There is no special structure to exclusively operate in domestic violence issues, within the Ministry of Justice. Domestic violence is covered by Directorate of Inspection of Dependent Institutions and Freelance Professionals, which covers also bailiff services. All statistical data about protection orders or emergency protection orders are processed from Statistical Directorate of the Ministry of Justice. For the free legal assistance, the State Commission for Legal Assistance has been established.

Ministry of Education and Science has the following duties:

- a. To design the educational programs for high schools and universities in regard to the behaviour rules within families.
- b. To prepare anti domestic violence textbooks and other additional materials for pupils and/or students.

Local authorities (municipalities, communes) have the following duties:

- a. To engage in the establishment of social service structures for domestic violence cases;
- b. To establish a regional 24/7 toll free telephone line, which will then establish links to local units, police, medical emergency units, and NPOs, therefore coordinating their actions;

- c. Establish social and rehabilitation centres for victims and perpetrators and coordinate efforts with existing ones, giving priority to specialized centres in respective fields.

Local government has established special sectors focused, among other areas, on domestic violence. Based on the in-depth interviews with Municipality representatives (Korça, Durrës, Vlora, Shkodra), these sectors are under different Directorates (Economic Assistance Directorate, Social Service Directorate, or Culture, Sport, and Social Service Directorate) depending on the organizational structure of each of the Municipalities. These sectors consist mainly of one specialist, who deals with domestic violence cases as well as gender equality. In addition, Municipalities, through the respective structures, support victims of domestic violence with economic assistance.

Social administrators, whose job description also includes issues related to prevention of domestic violence and treatment of victims, have been appointed in 37 Municipalities and 23 communes.¹⁴

According to the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 334, dated 07.02.2011 “On the establishment of a nationwide cross referral system for victims of domestic violence and its way of functioning”, the Local Government is the authority which leads the steering committee, the multidisciplinary technical team and appoints the local coordinator. According to MOLSAEO, 20 Municipalities have established this mechanism with the support of different donors, (UN Trust Fund, UNDP, USAID, and ADC): Shkodra, Vlora, Durrës, Korça, Rrëshen, Berat, Pogradec, Kamza, Puka, Lezha, Elbasan, Manza, Gramsh, Lushnja, Laç, Shijak, Gjirokastra, Përmet, Tirana, and Borough No.6 in Tirana.

Judicial system

Based on the domestic violence law, courts are responsible to process petitions for protection orders and emergency protection orders.

The judicial system in Albania has no specific sections or judges specialised in the domestic violence profile. Generally, in the district court level, these issues are handled by judges of the Family Section. There is not legal act which defines the criteria to be met by judges who adjudicate the domestic violence cases and no specific provision in this matter within the domestic violence law.

Under the Law “On the organization of the Judiciary System” the President of the Republic has the power to decide whether a court will have a family section and as well, the territorial jurisdiction for the trial of domestic violence cases. This competency is exercised by issuing a decree. The chairman of the district court has the competence to appoint the judges in the Family Section every two years.

Therefore, there is no unified structure in all district courts of the country. In some of them, there is a Family Section and the judges of this section have the responsibility to issue emergency protection orders and/ or protection orders. The cases are assigned on the basis of electronic lot for the issuance of POs, while, for EPOs, the judges on duty for emergency cases adjudicate the case, regardless if there is a family section in the district court.

There is a special section within the Prosecutor’s Office in Tirana District, which is responsible for crimes against life and health, which concern domestic violence issues as well. In other districts, every prosecutor handles domestic violence cases.

1.3.3. Albanian State Police

The General Directorate of ASP includes five departments: department against Organized and Serious Crimes, Public Order, Border and Migration, Support Services and Police Training.

There are 12 police directorates at the regional level, 12 regional traffic police units, 43 commissariats and eight regional Border and Migration Directorates. Zone Inspectors are imbedded in the community taking day-to-day responsibility of Community Policing activities on the ground. They are often the direct link to the head of

14. National Strategy for gender equality and reduction of gender based violence and domestic violence, 2011-2015. pq.38

communes and participate in local meetings when required.

The ASP approach to the delivery of Community Policing and the implementation of the Action Plan is covered by Article 122 of the State Police Law, whereby the ASP are obliged to consult at different levels with partners when preparing their annual district policing plans.

Moreover, the ASP has adopted Community Policing as the overarching component to the ASP seven years strategy with the following elements: Crime Prevention, Strategic Planning-led activity, Intelligence-Led Policing, Partnership, and Costs-led activity. The Strategy places particular emphasis on "identification and solution of problems, visibility and access by the people to the police services and the quality of services." There is also a specific Community Policing Action Plan in place for 2011-2013 (updated and based on the previous 2008-2010 Action Plan), which identifies a number of initiatives, those responsible, and timelines for implementation.

One of the priority areas defined in the Albanian State Police 7 year Strategy (2007-2013) is the: "*further reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour*". Within this context, special importance is given to the reduction of domestic violence through legal measures and on-going training of police personnel that deals with the cases of domestic violence.

Based on Law No.9669, dated 18.12.2006 "On measures against violence in family relations," Mol and GPD issued several legal acts, orders and documents to ensure the implementation of the law, as follows:

- Order No. 379, dated 03.03.2008, of the Minister of Interior: "On measures for the prevention and reduction of domestic violence and treatment of victims of violence in family relations"
- Order No. 344, dated 05.10.2010, of the Minister of Interior "On some amendments to the order of the Minister of Interior No.251, dated 15.02.2008, "On the compilation of criminality statistics", which reconfirms:
 - Creation of special registers for collecting evidence about cases of domestic violence, administered in each RPD and Police Commissariat;
 - Development of statistical forms for collecting evidence about cases of domestic violence;
 - Accountable police structures for collection of evidence, administration and filling in registers and statistical forms, established in each RPD and Police Commissariat.
- Order No.981, dated 31.10.2008, of General Police Director "On measures to be taken by the State Police for the prevention and reduction of domestic violence, treatment of victims of domestic violence".
- A manual is effective since 2008: "On standard procedures to be implemented by the Albanian State Police personnel when undertaking measures for the prevention of domestic violence, protection and care for the victims of domestic violence," approved following order No. 1035, dated 17.11.2008, by General Police Director. This manual describes in detail the procedure and duties of police officers in different functions when responding to the domestic violence incidents.

Specific structures within the State Police with focus on domestic violence

After the approval of the structural changes in the GPD in July 2007 and pursuant to Law No. 9669 "On measures against violence in family relations," specific child protection and domestic violence structures were established and rendered effective in 2008.

At the central level - GPD includes the Child Protection and Domestic Violence "sector" as part of the Directorate of Crime Investigation and Prevention, which is part of the Public Security Department; while at the local level - RPDs include Child Protection and Domestic Violence "sections" as part of the Public Order and Security Sector.

The Child Protection and Domestic Violence Sector and Sections represent the administrative and operational structure within the ASP with the responsibility to undertake all measures to prevent and reduce domestic violence and to protect the victims. These structures have the responsibility to supervise, monitor, and coordinate the work with local structures for the investigation and prevention of crimes to identify and respond to cases of

domestic violence. In addition, they should ensure cooperation and coordination of the work with all responsible authorities.

At the police commissariat level, there are no special structures that address domestic violence but zone inspectors and/or specialists for investigation of crimes who work in the Crime Investigation and Prevention Section deal with domestic violence cases. In addition, police officers working at the operational room (129) respond to all calls, including claims for domestic violence.

Police officers respond to the domestic violence incidents:

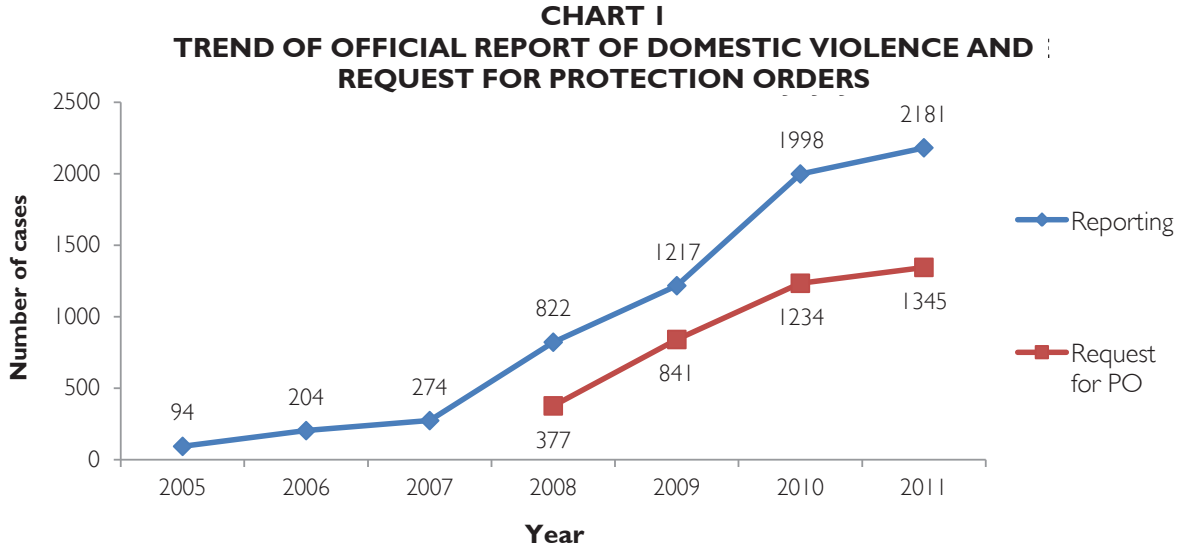
- To implement the law
- To prevent and reduce the domestic violence of any type
- To guarantee legal protection, especially security, to those who are victims of DV, paying special attention to children, the elderly, and people with disabilities
- To stop acts of violence
- To prevent serious injuries and murders
- To minimize and reduce repetition of violent acts

Main duties and responsibilities of Albanian State Police

- To establish special structures and appoint the responsible people
- To respond to any notification that victims or other people make in regard to domestic violence incidents
- To confiscate the weapons they find during inspections and to perform procedural actions accordingly
- To record the relevant findings / information in a written report and, as appropriate, to start immediate investigation (par excellence)
- To inform, orient, and refer the victim to the social and health services
- To protect and guarantee the safety of both victim and witnesses
- To help and contribute to stop the author / perpetrator as soon as possible
- To prepare and present the petition for EPO / PO
- To prepare the documents within the procedural deadlines in the event of criminal prosecution of the case
- To cooperate with the prosecutor to start the criminal prosecution accordingly
- To appoint police officers at the disposal of the victim when her/his life is at risk
- To participate in court hearings when it is necessary for the security of the victim
- To support the bailiff's office when it is required for the execution of court's decision, and to follow its implementation as well
- To accompany the victim and perpetrator in their household to supervise the transfer of their personal items, in case of a relevant court's decision

I.4. OFFICIAL REPORT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Based in the official data from the GPD, there is an increasing trend of domestic violence incidents that are officially reported to the Police as well as of requests for protection orders to the courts, especially after the Law on Domestic Violence entered in force, as we can see in following chart (chart 1).



Source: General Police Directorate

Table 1 shows the number of domestic violence incidents reported to the Police per each region from 2008 to the first half of 2012 (January – June).

If we compare 2011 reported cases with 2010 data, we can see that the reporting level in Fier region has almost doubled (+48.5%), in Durrës region +39.2%, and in Tirana region +29.2%. The level of official reporting Northern Albania, especially Kukës and Dibra, is much lower compared to Central and Southern Albania.

During 2011, 52.2% of reported cases occurred in Central Albania, 36.1% in Southern Albania, and 11.7% in Northern Albania.

TABLE 1	EVIDENCE OF REPORTED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES: 2008 - 1 ST HALF OF 2012 PER DISTRICT				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	January – June 2012
Tirana	437	579	539	696	392
Durrës	94	147	217	302	121
Elbasan	75	85	209	141	88
Vlora	18	92	173	107	61
Berat	12	59	117	101	59
Fier	38	28	233	346	68
Gjirokastra	11	13	62	53	28
Korça	32	46	122	179	107
Shkodra	61	77	182	85	46
Lezha	27	78	86	93	51
Dibër	9	6	16	46	56
Kukës	8	7	42	32	23
TOTAL	822	1217	1998	2181	1100

Source: General Police Directorate

According to data from the GPD regarding the period from 2008 to 2011, in 60% of the cases the victim is the wife vs. 6% when the victim is the husband. In 5% of the reported cases the domestic violence occurred amongst the siblings. In 7% of the reported cases the victim is the child vs. 8% when the victim is the parent. Based on the data of cases reported to the Police from 2009 to 2011, in 81% of cases the victims are females.

The following table 2 shows the progress of requests for protection orders through the years.

TABLE 2	REQUEST FOR PROTECTION ORDERS: 2008 - 1 ST HALF OF 2012 PER DISTRICT				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	January – June 2012
Tirana	249	415	393	467	233
Durrës	94	141	196	261	113
Elbasan	4	15	23	37	20
Vlora	8	46	82	68	44
Berat	6	58	114	99	52
Fier	0	7	84	89	37
Gjirokastra	2	7	34	35	22
Korça	3	26	105	129	91
Shkodra	4	49	109	60	27
Lezha	0	64	61	45	22
Dibër	3	6	16	34	26
Kukës	4	7	17	21	18
TOTAL	377	841	1234	1345	705

Source: General Police Directorate

According to the 2011 data from the GPD, out of 2181 reported domestic violence cases, only 23 cases (1,1%) are from Roma and Egyptian communities. Regarding LGBT community there are no official reported cases.

The District Court of Tirana confirms that during 2011, 501 protection orders were issued; out of 518 petitions with the subject "issuance of protection order" (64 cases were carried over), 149 cases or 28.8% were accepted, 334 cases or 64.5% were suspended (lack of evidence, documentation), and 18 cases or 3.5% were dropped. 81 cases were incomplete.

During the period from 01.01.2012 to 31.05.2012, the same court received 211 new petitions for protection order (72 cases were carried over); out of which it has closed 239 cases: 78 cases were accepted, 155 cases were suspended, and 6 cases were dropped.

According to the Shkodra District Court, during 2011, 93 Protection Orders were processed, out of which, 58 were accepted (62.4%), 27 were suspended (29%), and 8 were dropped (8.6%). In 79 cases the plaintiffs were females and in 14 cases they were males. In 57 cases, they belonged to the 26-45 group age and 39 cases were from rural areas.

According to MOLSAEO and DPP, from the yearly cases of domestic violence, there are 16-30 cases that have committed murder as shown from the table below. The number of murders in the family constitutes 17% to 22% of the total number of the murdered victims.

TABLE 3	CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND MURDERS: 2008 – 1stHALF OF 2012		
	Year	Cases reported to the Police	Murders
2008	822	22 cases	2.7%
2009	1217	16 cases	1,3%
2010	1998	20 cases	1.0%
2011	2181	30 cases	1,4%
January – June 2012	1100	11 cases	1,0%

Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and General Police Directorate

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This baseline study provides a landscape of the progress made when it comes to tackling Domestic Violence to assist. It is aimed at providing assistance for the identification of the target areas where the Programme may intervene and to draw conclusions that can be applied to improve the situation.

The study is mainly aimed at evaluating the present capacity and effectiveness of the ASP to deliver services, to address, investigate, and reduce incidents of domestic violence and the degree of coordination between ASP and other actors to ensure adequate addressing of domestic violence cases.

More *specifically*:

- To identify the extent of different types of domestic violence which are occurring or have occurred within the selected geographical areas
- To identify the policing response needs which arise as a result of these forms of violence
- To identify the especially vulnerable groups
- To identify the Community Policing strengths and resources which are there to prevent, respond, and investigate to cases of domestic violence
- To assess cultural and social attitudes that inhibit the reporting of domestic violence abuse and provide educated estimates of the amount of domestic violence that is not reported.
- To identify intervention strategies for prevention and investigation of domestic violence based on community policing, strengths, resources, and the needs of the victim

2.2. LOCATION / COVERAGE

This baseline study was conducted in five administrative areas (urban and rural) of the country:

- Tirana
- Durrës
- Vlorë
- Korçë
- Shkodër

2.3. TARGET GROUPS OF THE STUDY

- The community (youth and adults, urban and rural)
- Vulnerable groups: Roma, Balkan Egyptian, and LGBT community
- Victims of DV
- Albanian State Police
- Central Government
- Local Government
- Juridical System (Courts and Prosecutor)
- Civil society and shelters, SOS Call Centres

2.4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This study was designed and implemented as a combined methodological approach:

- a) desk research
- b) qualitative research
- c) quantitative research

This methodological approach gives the opportunity to have an in-depth understanding of the current situation in terms of reasons, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of the community and main actors, and quantification of these results at the same time.

The methods employed to implement the study have been specially designed to ensure that all the disadvantaged, marginalized, minority, and ethnic groups were included in the study in a meaningful manner. Gender perspectives have been fully included and addressed as all forms of diversity.

DATA CENTRUM, as an official member of ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research), fully complies with the provisions of the International Code of Marketing and Social Research practice and implements their fieldwork quality standards.

2.4.1. Desk research

The desk research was focused on reviews of official documents and strategies, existing reports, researches, and data on DV phenomena and official response in Albania.

2.4.2. Qualitative research

The qualitative phase was focused in four **main target groups**

- **Community** in urban and rural areas: men and women, 14-55 years old
- **Vulnerable groups:** Roma, Balkan Egyptian, and LGBT community
- **Victims** of DV
- **Authorities** and other actors:
 - o Albanian State Police (General Directorate of Police, Regional Police Departments, and Police Commissariats),
 - o Central Government,
 - o Local Government (municipalities),
 - o Juridical System (Courts and Prosecutor),
 - o NPOs,
 - o Shelters and Call Centres represented by specialists dealing with domestic violence

Accordingly to the target group, there were special **areas of evaluation** and **methods** used to collect the information from the 1st to 23rd of June 2012

The following table presents the areas of evaluation, method, and sample size per each target group.

**TABLE 4
AREAS OF EVALUATION, METHOD, AND SIZE PER TARGET GROUP**

Target group	Areas of evaluation	Method used	Synthesis (sample size)
<p>Community in urban & rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community perception regarding DV: seriousness, frequency, trend, source of information and reasons Personal network experience on DV: incidents and reporting process Perception on the profile of victims and perpetrators Awareness and knowledge on existing laws, responsible authorities and other supportive actors, services for victims and perpetrators Awareness and knowledge on the role of the police on DV Evaluation of the role of the police regarding DV: effectiveness, capacities, reasons Experience and satisfaction with Police services in general Community suggestions: services for victims and perpetrators, role of authorities and cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Groups with community in urban areas In-depth Interviews with the community in rural areas Focus Groups with marginalized groups (Balkan Egyptians and Roma) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total: 14 FGs and 15 IDIs 12 FGs with community in urban areas(14-55 years old; men and women separately) 2 FGs with vulnerable communities (Balkan Egyptians and Roma) 15 IDIs with community in rural areas (14-55 years old, men and women)
<p>Victims of DV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience with DV: type of DV, profile of perpetrator; duration, reasons, consequences Reporting process: who, how, where, when Evaluation of various institutions: services delivered, staff behaviour; procedure, interagency cooperation Degree of satisfaction with authorities and services received Reaction and consequences for the perpetrator Role of the police: contacts with the police, trust, services delivered satisfaction with services, staff, procedure, etc. Evaluation of Police cooperation with other authorities in the specific case Evaluation of Police capacities and effectiveness to respond to DV cases DV victims' suggestions in terms of laws and implementation, services for victims and perpetrators; role of authorities and their cooperation, staff, procedures, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 IDIs with victims of domestic violence

<p>Authorities and other actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable structure for DV, role, staff and reporting lines within the institution • Special structure and/or staff to deal with various cases in terms of gender, age, mental health status, sexual orientation, and other marginalized groups • Experience and statistics on DV phenomena, community awareness, reporting, etc. • Direct services and supportive activities provided • Interagency cooperation: with whom, how, satisfaction and reasons • Analysis of the current situation (strengths and weaknesses, unmet needs, suggestions for improvement) in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o legislation and implementation, o services for victims and perpetrators, o interagency cooperation • Special focus on Police: role, personnel, capacities, effectiveness, cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth Interviews with authorities • Workshops with NPOs and Police Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: 35 IDIs and 2 workshops • 14 IDIs with ASP in various levels* • 3 IDIs with Central Government • 4 IDIs with Local Government • 5 IDIs with the Juridical System • 9 IDIs with civil society, shelters and call centres** • 1 Workshop with Police Officers* working with DV • 1 Workshop with NPOs and organizations operating in Tirana and Durrës**
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*For details please see Appendix B

** For details please see Appendix A

Qualitative Instruments

Data Centrum designed tailored-made qualitative instruments per each target group and method: guideline for the FGs with urban community and semi-structured interview's guidelines to interview the rural community, victims, NPOs and authorities.

All final guidelines used were approved by the PMT and ASP.

Technical Details of Qualitative Research

Special training / briefing was delivered to the qualitative researchers' team. The training covered the purpose and topics of the study, key definitions on domestic violence, responsible authorities and services provided as per the Albanian Law, research procedure, and ethical aspects on interviewing victims of violence.

All focus groups and in-depth interviews have been conducted by professional and experienced qualitative researchers supported by facilitators.

Special attention has been given to IDIs with victims of DV, who have been interviewed by experienced psychologists, in adherence with all ethical rules.

Each focus group lasted approximately 2 hours; while the in-depth interviews lasted approx. 1.2 hours.

Standard consent procedures were adopted for all research participants.

Data Centrum has created a data base, which is continuously updated and is used for checking the recruitment specifications of each project, so that the following standards are fulfilled:

- No previous participation during the last 6 months.
- Participation not more than 3 times in total.
- No previous participation in similar area / service category.

Throughout the process of sample recruitments, the rules of ESOMAR are strictly adhered to.

2.4.3. Quantitative research

The quantitative phase was implemented in the form of face-to-face interviews (F2F), door-to-door (at respondents' home). The pen and paper interview was administrated by using a structured questionnaire and cards for specific questions.

The data collection took place from the 5th to the 13th of June 2012

The target group of this phase included men and women, 14-65 years old, residents in Albania, in urban and rural areas of the five regions, who don't work in sectors like research, social services, police, journalism, and justice.

Data Centrum used a multiple-stage stratified cluster sampling:

- Selection of the area (city / village)
- Selection of starting points
- 1 in 3 households
- Selection of the respondent as per the abovementioned specific characteristics

Sample size and distribution

TABLE 5 BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS				
		Weighted factor	Weighted	Not weighted
	Total	1.000	570	570
District / Region	Tirana	1.000	250	250
	Durrës	1.000	80	80
	Vlora	1.000	80	80
	Korça	1.000	80	80
	Shkodra	1.000	80	80
Residence	Urban	0.997	286	285
	Rural	1.004	284	285
Age	Young (14-24 years old)	0.891	196	220
	14-24 years old	0.891	196	220
	Adults (25-65 years old)	0.936	374	350
	25-35 years old	1.068	94	88
	36-45 years old	1.063	84	79
	46-55 years old	1.074	102	95
	56-65 years old	1.068	94	88
Gender	Female	1.000	285	285
	Male	1.000	285	285

Weight factors used to transform the actual sample distribution to real population distribution per age and area.

The Quantitative Instrument

The interview instrument was developed to capture information on respondents' awareness, perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and experience on domestic violence, emphasizing views on the role of the police.

The questionnaire contains seven sections. These are outlined below, along with an overview of the sub-topics covered in each section:

1. **Screening questions** to ensure that the right respondent is interviewed (age, gender, working sector, and residence)
2. **Opinion on current situation** (main problems in the country, in their area; current vs. past family relations and expectations for the future)
3. **Domestic violence awareness and attitudes** (awareness, source of information, perception on the frequency of the phenomena, personal network experience, acceptance, attitudes)
4. **Official response on DV** (awareness on laws, authorities, and services in place)
5. **Police** (general opinion and satisfaction with Police; Police and DV: role, effectiveness, satisfaction, cooperation with other institutions)
6. **Suggestions**
7. **Personal experience with DV** (type of DV, seriousness, reporting, services received and satisfaction with Police, reasons for not reporting, future intention to report)
8. **Demographics** (education, marital status, family members, children, working status, minorities)

Before finalizing the instrument and start the field work, a piloting phase took place to test the functionality and understanding of the questionnaire.

The final questionnaire was approved by the PMT and ASP.

Technical Details of the Quantitative Research

Data Centrum carefully selected and trained a team of 14 experienced quantitative interviewers to conduct the interviews, two experienced Field Supervisors to lead and monitor the interviewers, and a Field Manager who was there to ensure that all instructions and sample distribution were correctly implemented. This team was directly supported by the Project Coordinator and Project Assistant.

The whole team was specially trained in the procedure and the questionnaire of this specific research. The first day of training was organized before the piloting phase, while the second day of training after the piloting phase / before the field work. The training covered the purpose and topics of the study, key definitions on domestic violence, responsible authorities and services provided in accordance with the Albanian Law, sampling and procedure, and ethical aspects on interviewing young people and potential victims of violence.

The field work was organized with small groups of interviewers always coordinated and monitored by the Field Supervisors.

The average duration of interviews was 25 minutes.

Inspection Requirements

The inspection proceedings of all quantitative research projects conducted by Data Centrum are based on the inspection requirements set by ESOMAR.

The inspection methods implemented were the following:

- At least 25% of each interviewer's work was inspected on site by the Field Supervisors with the purpose to ensure that all procedures, as well as the interview guidelines and the sample selection criteria set by Data Centrum, were respected. Inspection was extended to the entire research work of each interviewer.
- The first questionnaires of all interviewers were inspected by the Field Supervisors, Project Assistant and

Field Manager, so that the question comprehensibility and accuracy of data collections were assessed.

Quality assurance

All interviewers were females based on the fact that domestic violence is a gender-based phenomenon. This way, we ensured that women and young people would feel more comfortable and be able to freely state any personal experience of DV, as well as their opinion on the authorities.

No sensitive personal data like name, home address, or phone number was required from the respondents.

All respondents were informed that their responses would remain totally anonymous and confidential.

The Field Supervisors, Field Manager, and Project Assistant continuously monitored the performance of all interviewers and the quality of data collected. And the results of such monitoring were very satisfying.

Data Processing and Analysis

After physically checking the questionnaires, the data entry was done by experienced data entry operators using a special research program (Quantum). Quantum data entry program provides 100% electronic check on filters and ranges of values for clean data. This procedure was supervised by the Data Production Manager of Data Centrum. The clean database was used to produce the statistical tables and data analysis.

Response rate

As per Data Centrum practice, an itinerary form was used to record all the contacts that each interviewer made. In order to achieve 570 F2F successful interviews, we contacted a total of 1379 people.

There were 473 cases of absence (34,3%), 196 cases of refusals (14,2%), 140 cases of ineligible respondents due to specifications (10,2%). So the response rate is 41.3%.

Validity

The research tries to encompass all the important topics related to the domestic violence and role of Police, ensuring the validity of content. Furthermore, the data is collected with high accuracy and under appropriate conditions, with voluntary participation from respondents, and with complete motivation and professionalism from the interviewers. The data have been cleaned and weighted before analyzed.

Statistical error: $\pm 4.19\%$ (at 2σ level)

Small bases: up to 50 are indicative only

Further, the tables contain an asterisk if the number of respondents in the group is very small ($n < 50$). In this case, percentages have to be interpreted with extreme caution because random fluctuations in the sample composition could have a major effect on the distribution of answer categories in the sample.

2.4.4. Limitations of the survey

In preparing this report the authors recognize that there are some limitations

- The study covered only 5 out of 12 administrative areas of the country
- Sample size in various cells of population breakdowns has limited reliability due to small number of people belonging to these cells
- Lack of prior research studies with a specific focus on the role of the Police and interagency cooperation on domestic violence.
- Limited access to official documentation and statistics i.e. no data from Albania's Census 2011 for the group ages has been published yet
- Difficulty in accessing institutions and people, especially victims of domestic violence

We recommend that further research is carried out all over the country (national coverage) to complement our current work.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

This chapter includes analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected from all target groups.

Quantitative findings from the urban and rural community of Tirana, Durrës, Vlora, Korça, and Shkodra regions, will be presented as a total and furthermore the data are mainly analyzed by group age (but not only). Within this context, “young” refers to people of 14-24 years old vs. “adults” which refers to 25-65 years old participants.

NOTE: the data in the tables shows the percentage (%) of the given answers in the respective base.

3.1. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3.1.1. Community perception on domestic violence

Most of the participants spontaneously recognize and mention various type of domestic violence, such as: forcing isolation from friends, school, and/or work, denying economic support, threatening to cause physical injury, constant criticism, humiliation, gender inequality, women lack of permission to work, slapping, biting, murder, suicide due to jealousy or due to continuous physical domestic violence, exploitation of children: child labour, street children (especially amongst Roma community), sexual abuse, abandonment, child neglecting, violation of human rights, control of financial means, etc.

In addition, participants 14 to 35 years old perceive the violence between intimate partners / lovers as a form of domestic violence.

3.1.2. Community awareness on domestic violence and source of information

All people are aware on the issue of domestic violence and the main sources of information are: TV (99.7%), friendship network (53.6%), family network (45.3%), and the press (45.8%).

There are differences between young and adults. Young people are more active using internet (45.9 %) and books (23.6%). Most of them are pupils and students, so school is another important source of information (37.3%). While adults share more information on domestic violence with their personal network (friends 56% and family network 46.9%) and in their working place (16.9%).

TABLE 6 SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	Total (n=570)	Young (n=196)	Adults (n=374)
On television	99.7	99.5	99.7
Through your friends	53.6	49.1	56.0
In magazines, newspapers	45.8	53.6	41.7
Through your family network	45.3	42.3	46.9
On the internet	22.7	45.9	10.6
On the radio	22.6	26.4	20.6
At school	15.6	37.3	4.3
In books	14.5	23.6	9.7
At your workplace	13.4	6.8	16.9
Other (cinema, etc.)	3.9	6.0	2.5

There are no statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of source of information. There are little differences between habitants of different districts: more respondents who reside in the districts of Korça and Shkodra state they get informed from the radio and less through internet, if compared to those residing in the districts of Tirana, Durrës and Vlora.

3.1.3. Perception on the prevalence of domestic violence

Almost half of respondents stated that domestic violence is a very common phenomenon in the country.

TABLE 7 HOW COMMON IS THE DV PHENOMENON IN ALBANIA?	Very common	Common	Uncommon	Not common at all
Total (n=570)	51.4	38.9	9.0	0.5
Young (n=196)	48.2	41.8	8.6	1.4
Adults (n=374)	53.1	37.4	9.1	0
Male (n=285)	49.9	39.0	9.8	0.9
Female (n=285)	53.0	38.9	8.1	0
Urban areas (n=286)	55.7	34.3	9.7	0.3
Rural areas (n=284)	47.1	43.6	8.3	0.6

Qualitative analysis reveals that the patriarchal mentality, male superiority, gender discrimination within the family, along with poor economic and financial situation, pressure due to continuous increase of prices, low employment rate, higher demands / requests from children, alcoholic and drug addiction, gambling, jealousy, mental health status, lack of parental skills when raising and educating their children, poor interfamily communication, are some of the most important reasons that make domestic violence quite present. In addition, the inadequate implementation of the law was considered as a trigger which boosts the phenomenon.

“Men are dominant; husbands have the right to beat their wives and children –this is what men think.” (Girl, 17 years, urban Tirana)

“We are a country with strong traditional customs. There is violence within relatives and family members. These are inherited stereotypes that are early cultivated within the family.” (Male, 25-35 years old, urban Tirana)

“Poverty results in a lot of problemsthe children want more.....nowadays wives do not know what they want. And so, in a lot of cases, there is domestic violence, divorces, many divorces” (Female, Roma community)

30% of the respondents from Durrës region, almost the double compared to Tirana (12.6%), Korça (15.1%), and Shkodra (17.6%), stated that domestic violence is a very common phenomenon in their area.

TABLE 8 HOW COMMON IS THE DV PHENOMENON IN YOUR AREA?	Tirana (n=250)	Durrës (n=80)	Vlora (n=80)	Korca (n=80)	Shkodra (n=80)
Very common	12.6	30.0	22.7	15.1	17.6
Fairly common	38.4	39.8	33.8	41.3	39.8
Not very common	39.1	24.0	36.2	34.9	36.2
Not at all common	7.6	3.6	3.8	7.6	5.1
Don't know	2.4	2.7	3.6	1.1	1.3

“The domestic violence in our area is almost an everyday issue. During the last years this phenomenon is more frequent due to the high stress and various economic problems in our families.” (Male, 51 years old, Rural Shkodra)

“We hear every day in the news or when talking to others that a guy beat his wife, or another couple divorced because of jealousy....” (Female, 32 years old, Rural Durrës)

More than 1 in 2 respondents stated they knew someone in their personal network of friends and family or neighbourhood that had experienced at least one type of domestic violence.

Victims of domestic violence, compared to the total population, report higher degree of domestic violence in their personal network and neighbourhood.

Participants, who were members of the Roma and Egyptian community, stated that domestic violence is a wide social phenomenon, and not specifically spread only amongst them. Economic problems and jealousy are mentioned as two main factors that lead towards domestic violence.

TABLE 9 DO YOU KNOW OF ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN A VICTIM OF ANY FORM OF DV?	Total (n=570)	Victims of Domestic Violence (n=254)
Where you work or study	35.9 %	41.7%
In your immediate area / neighbourhood or building	55.5%	66.4%
In your personal network (friends and family)	56.8%	70.4%

The qualitative data disclose that almost all participants shared concrete cases of domestic violence from their neighbours, friends, colleagues, and cousins.

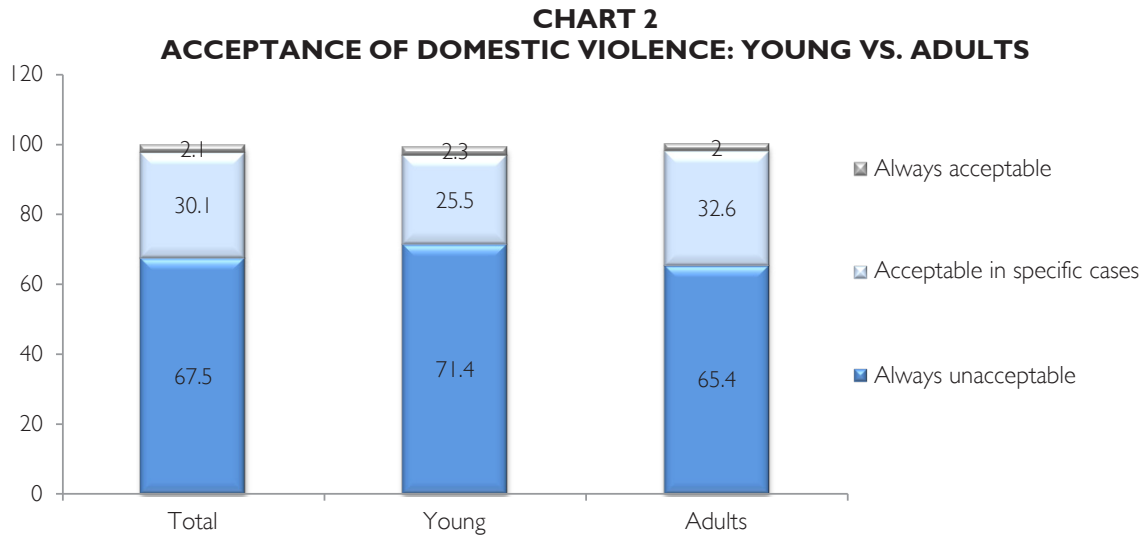
“There are many poor families in my neighbourhood. There is a 59 years old man who has completed the elementary level education. He is unemployed and he beats his wife and teenage daughter every day. He hits his wife because she’s not providing food and his daughter because she needs money to go to school. My father has tried several times to come between and my mom called the police. Police detained him for one night and the next day he was back. No result....” (Female, 19-24 years old, Tirana)

“My case is the case of a woman who is subject to violence by the husband. Even though my mother is 70 years old, she is also severely beaten by my father and other family members around us” (Female, 25-35 years old, Vlora, rural)

“Yes, I have information about such cases, within the family and in the social network. But I don’t want to mention them specifically.” (Male 36-55 years old, Shkodra, rural)

3.1.4. Attitudes towards domestic violence

The majority of participants (67.5%) consider domestic violence as unacceptable in any case, while 3 out of 10 people consider it as acceptable in specific cases. Only 2.1% say it is always acceptable. 71.4% of young people vs. 65.4% of adults consider domestic violence as always unacceptable.



“It’s human to express yourself, that’s why emotional and psychological abuse is so common and not perceived as serious violence” (Male, 25-35 years, Tirana, urban)

“The most unacceptable types are the physical and sexual violence.” (Female, 19-24 years, Korca, rural)

“We see slapping as an educational method for children. We are used with it. We do it ourselves now.” (Male, 25-35 years, Durrës, rural)

“Well, we raise the voice, as there is no house without debates. But whopping and murders within the family are really serious, intolerable” (Female, Roma Community)

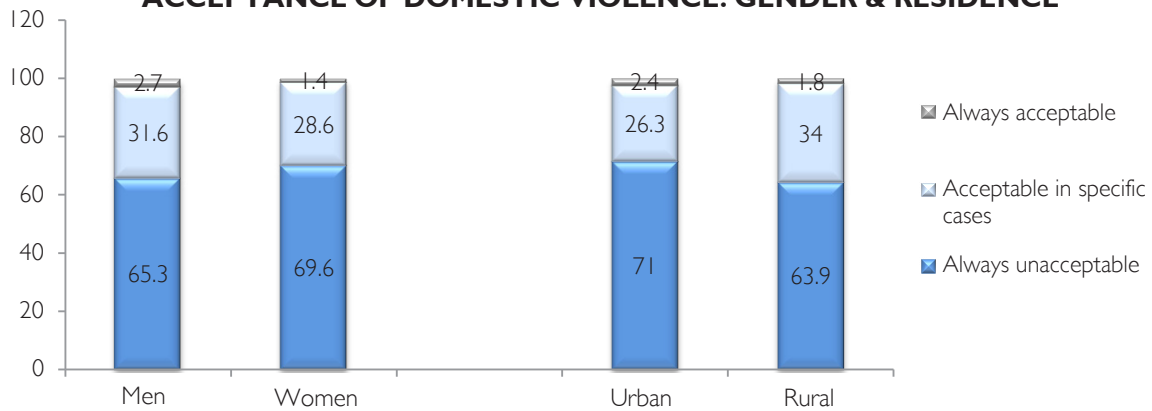
The in-depth discussion, disclose that emotional and psychological abuses are considered as more frequent and acceptable since their consequences are less visible.

Domestic violence against children (shouting, bullying, slapping, pulling the ears, threaten, etc.) is usually considered as acceptable with the argument that it is for the best interest of the child, and it is an educational technique.

Domestic violence against women is usually considered as rooted in the masculine mentality of the population. Female participants consider it as one hostile and annoying fact, while males are mainly descriptive, and don’t express openly if domestic violence is acceptable or not.

There are some slight differences on acceptance of domestic violence based on gender and residence. 2.7% of men say domestic violence is always acceptable vs. 1.4% of women. 71% of urban residents vs. 63.9% of rural residents consider domestic violence as always unacceptable.

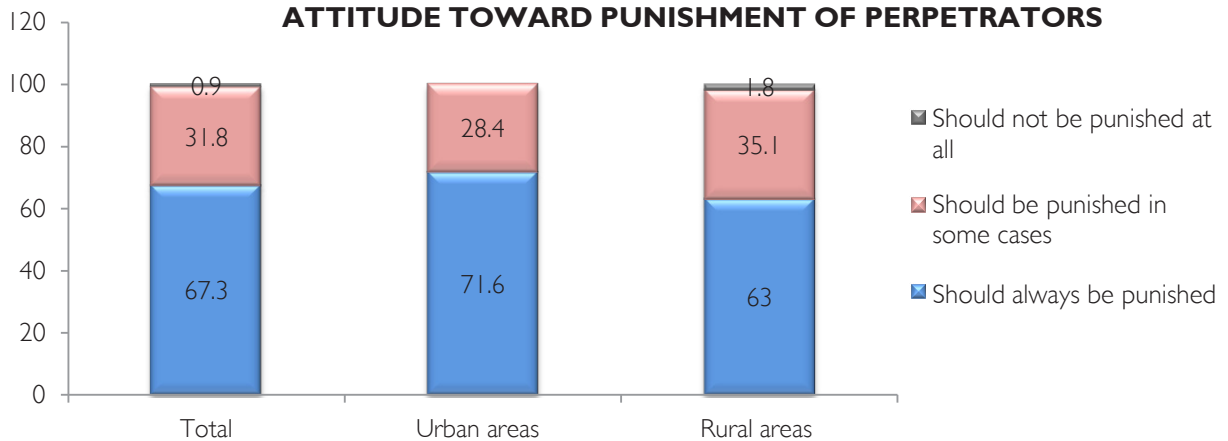
**CHART 3
ACCEPTANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: GENDER & RESIDENCE**



When asked if the perpetrator should be punished, 67.3% of respondents said that s/he should always be punished, and such attitude is more visible amongst urban residents.

1.8% of respondents living in rural areas stated that perpetrators should never be punished.

**CHART 4
ATTITUDE TOWARD PUNISHMENT OF PERPETRATORS**



During the in-depth discussion, participants stated that perpetrators should be punished and imprisoned in line with the severity of the domestic violence. Furthermore, they suggest supportive measures for the perpetrators, since most of them are described as alcoholic or drug addicted, or with mental health disorders; such as rehabilitation programs, psychological counselling, group therapy, employment opportunities, and support from their own community.

We read some statements regarding domestic violence to the respondents and asked them to state their personal degree of agreement.

83% of respondents believe that family problems should be solved by discussing with each other and not by using violence.

Almost half of respondents believe that domestic violence can happen in every family.

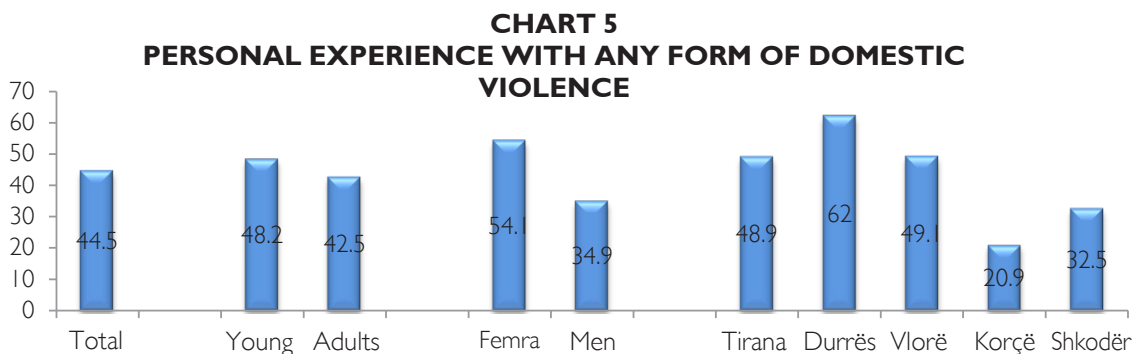
TABLE 10 ATTITUDES TOWARD DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	Totally agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally disagree
Domestic violence is a phenomena which can happen in every family	48.8	33.4	11.8	6.0
For the sake of the family, the victims should forgive the perpetrators	17.5	37.5	26.5	17.8
Domestic violence depends on the character of family members	51.4	28.8	16.9	2.5
The problems should be solved with discussion and not with violence	83.0	11.4	5.6	0.0

3.1.5. Personal experience: type of domestic violence and degree of seriousness

44.5% of 570 respondents interviewed in the five districts said to have experienced at least one type of domestic violence. Less than 1% refuses to reply.

54.1% of women vs. 34.9% of men (who are 14-65 years old) stated to have experienced at least one form of domestic violence in their life. Furthermore, there are no significant differences between young and adult women’s experience with domestic violence (respectively 52.7% vs. 54.9%) in comparison with young vs. adult men who differ in their experience (respectively 43.6% vs. 30.3%).

Based on what respondents said, there are differences between regions in terms of personal experience with domestic violence: 62% in Durrës, 49.1% in Vlora, 48.9% in Tirana, 32.5% in Shkodra, and 20.9% in Korça. There are no significant differences between urban and rural areas (respectively 42.7% vs. 46.3%).



Out of all interviewees, 41.6% of respondents have experienced emotional abuse, 16.9% psychological abuse, 6.2% physical violence and only 0.4% sexual violence.

Results from respondents who said they were victims of at least one form of domestic violence (n=254) show that: 93.3% of them experienced emotional abuse, 38.2% psychological abuse, 14.2% physical violence, and only 0.8% sexual violence.

So we can notice that there is overlapping of various domestic violence forms. The victims have experienced an average of 1.5 forms of domestic violence.

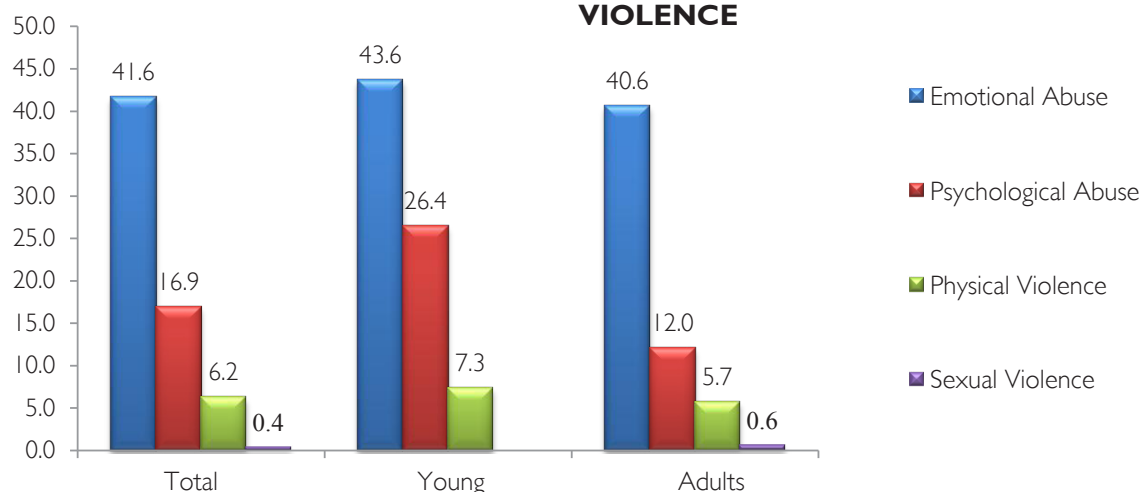
Significant differences between young and adults in terms of psychological abuse (respectively 26.4% vs. 12%).

The in-depth discussions disclose that young people claim their parents don't allow them to freely express their

opinions, talk to them in a manner that makes youth feel bad or worthless, insist on wanting to know where they are at all times, do not allow them to have a romantic relationship, to go out in the evening, female teenagers are not allowed to have male friends, etc.

Both adults and young people, victims of domestic violence, have experienced various types of domestic violence. The average for young victims is 1,6 vs. the average of 1,4 types of domestic violence experienced by adult victims.

**CHART 6
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH EACH TYPE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



There are differences between young men and women, as there are between adult men and women in their experience with various forms of domestic violence.

Emotional abuse occurs twice more amongst adult women compared to adult men (54.3% vs. 26.9%), while physical violence occurs almost 4 times more amongst adult women than adult men (9.1% vs. 2.3%).

There are almost no differences between young women and men in experience with psychological and physical violence. Almost 4 out of 10 young men experience emotional abuse vs. 5 out of 10 young women.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: YOUNG VS. ADULTS	Female		Male	
	Young	Adult	Young	Adult
Emotional abuse	48.2%	54.3%	39.1%	26.9%
Psychological abuse	28.2%	13.7%	24.5%	10.3%
Physical violence	7.3%	9.1%	7.3%	2.3%
Sexual violence	-	0.6%	-	0.6%
Not abused	46.4%	44.0%	55.5%	69.7%

The qualitative data reveal that domestic violence is not only multiple, but also a repeated phenomenon occurring for years to the victim.

3.1.6. Profile of domestic violence victims

44.5% of Tirana, Durrësi, Vlora, Korça and Shkodra regions' population aged 14-65 years have experienced at least one type of domestic violence. They are distributed in various group ages. Six out of ten victims are women / girls and almost the same percentage of them is married. They live in families with an average number of family members of 4.6 and average family income of 37,015 Lekë / month (265 Euro).

1 in 20 said that victims of domestic violence belong to minorities.

TABLE 12 PROFILE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS		n=254
		in %
AGE	14-18 years old	18.2
	19-24 years old	18.9
	25-35 years old	19.8
	36-45 years old	18.6
	46-55 years old	15.2
	56-65 years old	9.3
	Average age of victims	33.5 years old
GENDER	Female	60.8
	Male	39.2
CITY SIZE	Urban	48.2
	Rural	51.8
EDUCATION	Compulsory	38.5
	Secondary	44.2
	Higher	17.4
MARITAL STATUS	Never married	37.3
	Married	57.0
	Other (divorced, widowed, living with someone)	5.7
WORKING STATUS	Working	37.3
	Non working (student, retired, currently unemployed, invalid)	62.7
FAMILY MEMBERS	2-3 members	16.5
	4 members	35.5
	5 members	26.1
	6+ members	21.7
	Average number of family members	4.6 members
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME	Up to 20.000 ALL	21.6
	20.001 – 40.000 ALL	33.4
	40.001 – 60.000 ALL	27.0
	Over 60.000 ALL	13.0
	Prefer not to say	5.1
	Average monthly family income	37015 ALL
MINORITY	Roma community	2.4
	Greek ethnicity	2.3

3.1.7. Profile of perpetrators

There is high consistency in the opinion of community, NPOs, and authorities when describing the profile of perpetrator.

The main three categories of perpetrators according to their descriptions are:

- Husbands toward their wives (especially 35-55 years old, who have completed compulsory education, unemployed, alcoholic, gambling addicted, fanatic, jealous)
- Parents toward their children. According to National Child Help Line (ALO 116), the perpetrator of children victims of domestic violence are mainly the father towards the sons and the mother towards the daughters.
- Children toward their elder parents, especially male children, according to Kennedy Foundation.

There are fewer cases when siblings were mentioned as another category of perpetrators, mainly brothers amongst each other or brothers toward sisters, especially those affected by property conflicts and financial heredity disputes.

According to the interviewed police officers, there are fewer cases of married women who abuse their husbands.

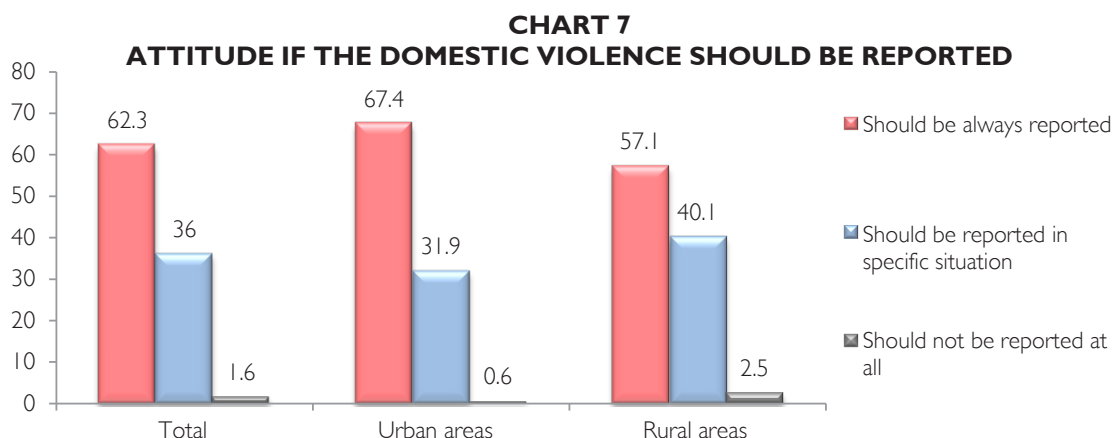
“I remember one 65-66 years old woman, beaten by the husband who was more or less 70 years old. She was hospitalized for several months. Her mouth was cut; she had fractures all over the body. The reason of the violence was property division between the sons and the only witness of the incident was their 5-6 years old nephew who disclosed how the grandfather had beaten the grandmother...” (NPO)

3.2. ADDRESSING & REPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3.2.1. Community attitudes toward reporting domestic violence incidents

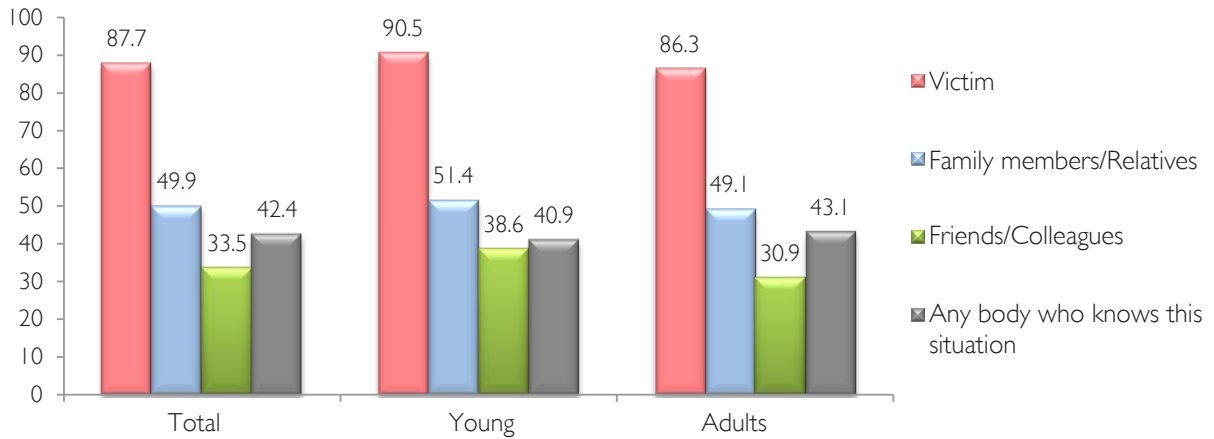
Almost 1 in 3 people believe that domestic violence should be reported in specific situations.

There are differences between the attitudes of urban and rural community. Rural respondents are more conservative – 2.5% say that domestic violence should never be reported and 40.1% say it should be reported in specific situations.



When asked who has the right to report a domestic violence incident, almost 9 out of 10 respondents said: “the victim,” and almost 4 out of 10 said: “anyone who knows” has the right to report it.

**CHART 8
WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO REPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



3.2.2. Community awareness on laws on domestic violence

TABLE 13 AWARENESS ON SPECIAL LAWS / LEGAL MEASURES IN ALBANIA IN REGARD TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE		Total (n=570)
The prevention of domestic violence		70.8%
Social support for victims		56.9%
Legal support for victims		72.15
Medical support for victims		67.0%
The punishment of perpetrators		86.5%
The rehabilitation of perpetrators		50.5%

The quantitative data show there is high level of awareness on laws / legal measures on the area of domestic violence. But the in-depth investigation with qualitative methods discovered that participants expect such laws to be in place, and in the reality they lack knowledge about the content of the law and the specific duties of responsible authorities.

Participants up to 35 years old have slightly more information on legislative aspects on domestic violence i.e. latest amendments, gender equality law, child helpline, etc. The interviewed victims of domestic violence reported that they did not have information on the protection measures and available services. Few of them were informed by police officers (129 operational room), the church, and NPOs.

“Till the moment I reported the incident to the Police, I did not have any information on the procedures or support.” (Female victim, Shkodra)

“I was informed by “Sot për të ardhmen” centre, and not by official authorities like it supposed to be...” (Female victim, Durrës)

3.2.3. Community awareness on responsible authorities for domestic violence

Most of respondents said the institutions responsible of providing support to victims of domestic violence are: Police (95%), personal network (86.8%), followed by the Judiciary System (Courts and Prosecutors 83.7%).

TABLE 14 AWARENESS ON AUTHORITIES / INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE OF SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ALBANIA	Total (n=570)
Police	95.0%
Central Government	51.8%
Municipality/Commune	53.9%
Judiciary system (Court/ Prosecution)	83.7%
Health Institution	57.8%
NGO/Civil Society	44.8%
Shelters	49.3%
Family Members/Friends/Colleagues	86.8%
Other (psychologist)	1.3%

The in-depth discussions show that participants perceive Police as the main authority to report incidents of domestic violence and as the primary responsible one that provides first aid; isolates the perpetrator and prevents the aggravation of the family situation.

Other participants said that domestic violence should be addressed within the family, especially in rural areas where there is higher pressure of the patriarchal mentality.

Almost 1 in 2 respondents identify all the other responsible authorities such as health institutions (hospital, emergency health centres), Local and Central Government, followed by shelters and civil society.

53,9% of respondents consider Municipalities and/or Communes as responsible authorities to support domestic violence victims, while they don't have information on the availability of specialized sectors within their structures in regard to this issue.

During the focus groups, the role of the psychologist in various institutions (municipality, hospitals, and schools) was highly emphasized as needed to support the victims.

In addition, civil society and media, especially TV programs, are perceived as very important players in addressing issues of domestic violence and supporting the victims.

3.2.4. Community awareness on services provided to victims of domestic violence in Albania

TABLE 15 AWARENESS ON VARIOUS SERVICES THAT CAN BE PROVIDED TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ALBANIA	Total (n=570)
A toll-free phone number for victims seeking assistance and advice	38.4%
Website for victims seeking assistance and advice	27.7%
Protection orders from the court	69.1%
Shelters	50.0%
Social services	51.1%
Legal services	72.1%
Medical services	66.5%

Respondents are aware that domestic violence victims have access to different services. The three most mentioned services: legal services (72.1%), Protection Orders from Court (69.1%) and medical services (66.5%). Half of the respondents mentioned shelters and other social services.

However, during individual interviews with participants from rural areas, it was revealed that in general they lack information about services provided to victims of domestic violence.

Most of the participants in the focus group discussions said that most of the services are not provided and/or are not sufficient to meet the needs of the victims of domestic violence.

Almost all participants said the most needed support services for victims of domestic violence which must be improved include: psychological support provided by experts, employment, shelter, free legal procedures for the divorce, economic assistance and protection from the state, while for perpetrators, the following support services need to be in place and/or improved: legal measures towards perpetrator should be taken, psychological support especially for those who have mental health problems or emotional disorders, rehabilitation services, employment services.

3.2.5. Community perception about authorities which can help the most in preventing domestic violence

Judiciary system, education / schools, and Police followed by media are perceived as the institutions that help the most in preventing domestic violence.

TABLE 16 DEGREE OF HELP THAT VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS CAN GIVE IN PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	Very helpful	Helpful	Not so helpful	No helpful at all	Don't know
Police	54.1	37	6.3	1.8	0.7
Central Government	41.6	25.6	21.5	8.5	2.9
Local Government (municipality / commune)	35.1	38.5	14.2	5.6	6.6
Civil society /NPOS	34.4	37.2	19.3	3.6	5.5
Shelters	33.2	36.4	18.7	2.2	9.6
Health services	39.8	38.2	16	3.8	2.2
Judiciary system (courts and prosecutor)	63.6	23.8	11	0.3	1.2
Religious institutions	19.6	28.3	25.3	24.3	2.4
Media	47.5	32.1	16.4	3.8	0.2
Schools / education	57.4	30.3	10.1	1.4	0.7

“The school psychologist should provide information to youth and children about domestic violence, how to be protected, where to report...” (Female, 23 years old, Tirana, rural)

“In schools, there are efforts to increase the number of qualified employees, to have additional psychologists. The number of identified cases has increased, but still there is a lot to be done. One psychologist covers 3-4 schools. It’s difficult to identify and report cases.” (NPO)

3.2.6. Most trusted institutions where to report domestic violence incidents

When people were asked which institution they trust the most to report the issue of domestic violence, they identified 3 main trusted bodies: Police, personal network, and judiciary system (courts & prosecutors).

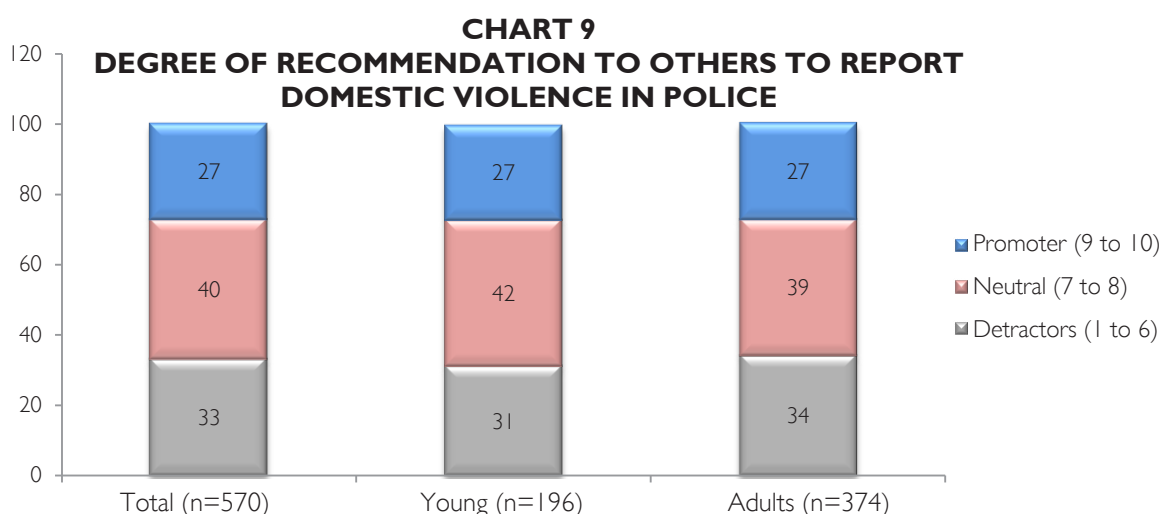
TABLE 17 SUPPOSE A CASE OF DV HAPPENED IN YOUR FAMILY. WHICH AUTHORITY YOU TRUST THE MOST TO REPORT IT?	Most trusted authority	Total trust
Police	59.1	73.7
Family members/Friends/Colleagues	17.4	61.0
Judiciary system	11.7	49.9
NPOs/Civil society	3.4	12.4
Municipality/Commune	1.7	11.3
Central government	1.1	10.1
Health institutions	0.2	9.8
Shelters	0.2	7.7
I don't trust any body	2.3	2.3
Refuse to reply/I don't know	2.9	2.9

"I would go to the police. The municipality cannot solve anything; I would go there for employment. Probably even to the court." (Female, 25-35 years old, Tirana, urban)

"If I was violated by my partner, I would directly report to the police. If I was violated by my family, then I would go to my friends or partner." (Female, 14-18 years old, Shkodra)

3.2.7. Degree of recommendation to others to report domestic violence to Police

The respondents were asked to which extent they would recommend others to report a domestic violence incident to the Police, by using a scale from 1 to 10 (1 means don't recommend at all, 10 means totally recommend).



Naming as “detractors” those respondents who rate 1-6, “neutral” those who rate 7-8, and “promoters” the ones who rate 9-10, we can calculate the Net Promoter Score, which is minus 6. This score shows that the network / community don’t really promote the reporting of domestic violence to the Police.

Some participants from both urban and rural areas said that reporting of domestic violence depends on the type of violence: physical violence should be reported to police and psychological violence should be dealt with the relatives or NPOs who provide such support.

“Protection is not ensured. If the system does not function, people are afraid. The functioning is crucial” (Male, 25-35 years old, Tirana urban)

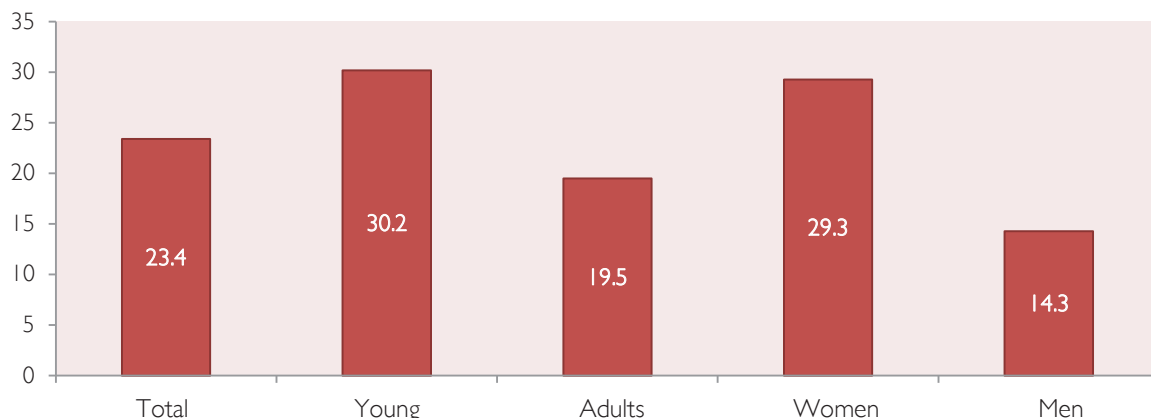
“Yes, for the cases when people are physically violated and continuously suffer from violence. While, if it happens only once, family members should interfere to resolve the problem” (Male, 36-55 years old, Korça rural)

“I’m not sure if I should report, because I’m afraid of the separation. Usually the couples have children... what will happen with them, will they be separated? The consequences are dealt with by the children afterwards...” (Female, 25-35 years old, Vlora rural)

3.2.8. Authorities and degree of reporting domestic violence from victims

Out of 254 domestic violence victims, 23.4 % of them address the incident to authorities or personal network (friends, relatives, colleagues). Young people and women address this issue more than adults and men.

**CHART 10
ADDRESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS**



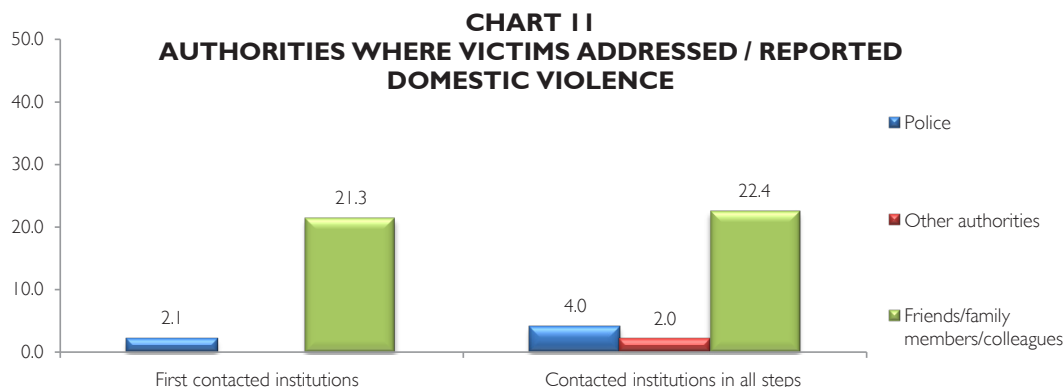
According to NPOs and different authorities, the level of reporting domestic violence is still low, although there is awareness raising and reporting has increased in the last years. On the other hand, they say that statistics about the phenomenon-reporting ratio are lacking.

“I can say that it’s not reported too much, considering what it exists in practice. Statistics are needed, but even in this case, many people would not admit that they are violated”. (NPO)

“Reporting has increased due to awareness raising activities about domestic violence. The issue stands in the fact that the victims often change their mind, because they lack opportunities for shelter and sometimes are influenced by the opinion or fear of separating the family.” (Shelter)

The victims were asked to which authority they initially reported the incident, and if they further had contacts with other authorities in regards to domestic violence.

Out of 254 victims, 2.1% of them initially reported the incident to Police, while 21.3% trusted their personal network.



Overall 4% of victims finally reported their issue to the Police; while 2.0% addressed the case to other authorities such as Municipality, Hospital, NPOs, Shelter; and Psychologist (1 case per each).

According to NPOs and different authorities, the typical authority to report is the police, because it is perceived as one authority with power, strength, and which provides protection for citizens.

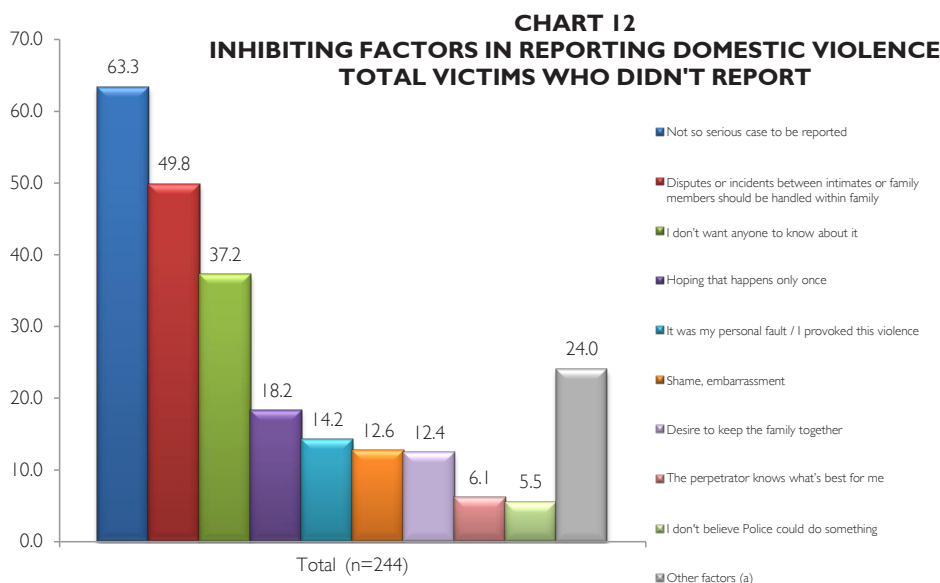
“The victims often refer to commissariats, because they believe the blue uniform. They think that Police will protect them, will offer support, as the most competent authority ...” (NPOs)

3.2.9. Barriers and triggers in reporting domestic violence incidents

Out of 244 victims of domestic violence, who didn't report the incident to any institution, 63.3% of them said the incident/s were not been serious / severe enough to be reported, followed by half of them who said that such issues should be handled within the family.

Other factors that inhibit reporting of domestic violence are to keep the privacy of such sensitive situation (37.2%) and the hope that it will be a single / isolated incident (18.2%).

Only 5.5% of them said that the reason why they don't report the previous incident/s is the lack of trust that Police can or will do something.



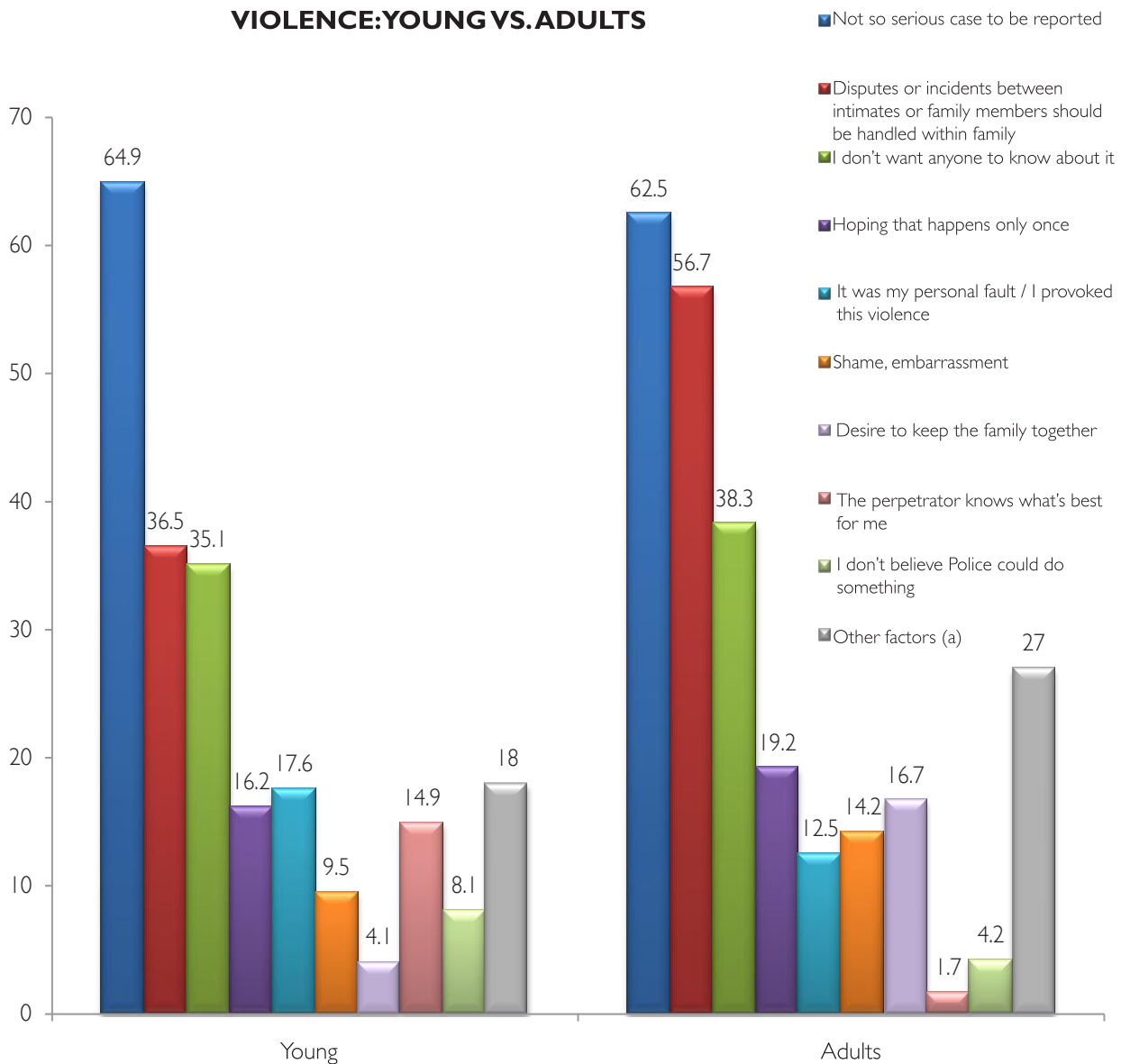
(a) Other factors include: Fear from the perpetrator (5.3%), economic dependence from the perpetrator (4.2%), the belief no one will trust me (1.1%) Police officers know / are friends with the perpetrator (0.6%), etc..

"I also know somebody who is maltreated by the husband, but she does not report it, because she's scared by the husband. She's also ashamed that she will be subject to prejudice by others. I'm also ashamed to say that my mother is beaten from my father". (Young female, Roma community)

There are some differences between young and adults in the inhibiting factors to report the domestic violence. 56.7% of adults vs. 36.5% of young people considered domestic violence as an issue that should be handled within the family.

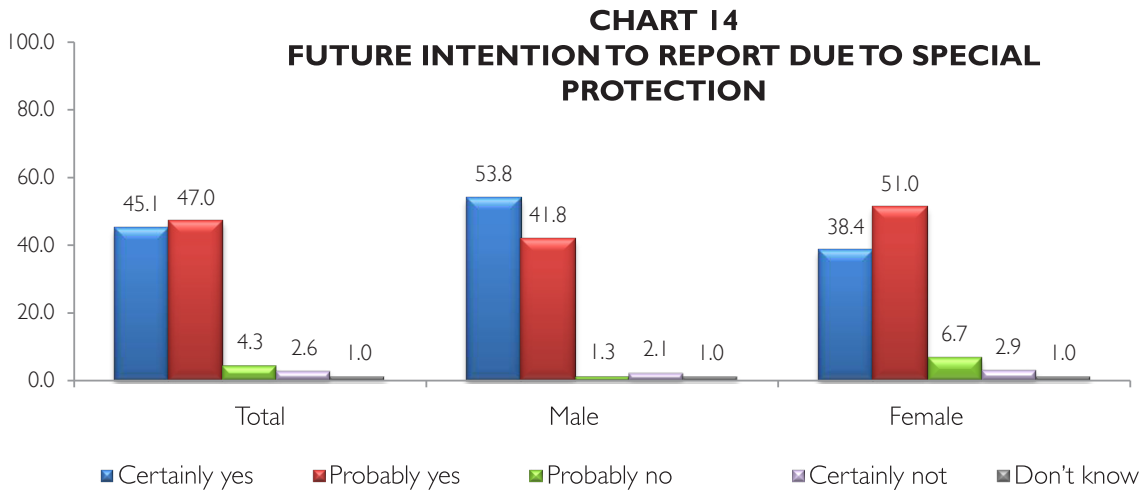
Adults feel more responsible to keep the family together (16.7%) compared to young people (4.1%), therefore, they don't report domestic violence incidents. While 14.9% of young people believe that the perpetrators know what's best for them vs. 1.7% of adults. Lack of trust in the Police is higher amongst young people (8.1% vs. 4.2% at adults).

**CHART 13
INHIBITING FACTORS IN REPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: YOUNG VS. ADULTS**

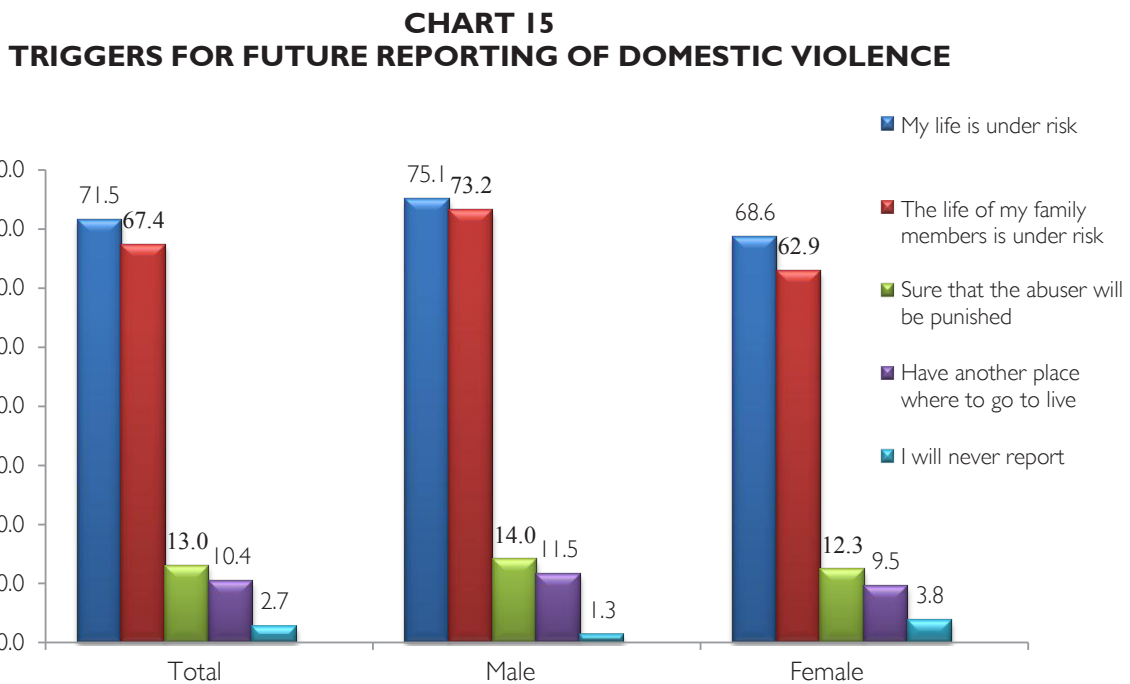


(a) Other factors include: Fear from the perpetrator; economic dependence from the perpetrator; the belief no one will trust me, Police officers know / are friends with the perpetrator, etc.

When respondents, victims of domestic violence who never reported this issue, were told there is in place special protection measure (Protection Order released by Courts), 92% of them said if such incident happened in the future, they would most probably report it.



The majority of victims, who never reported domestic violence incidents, intend to report it in the future in case their life or the lives of their family members are at risk.



3.3. ALBANIAN STATE POLICE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

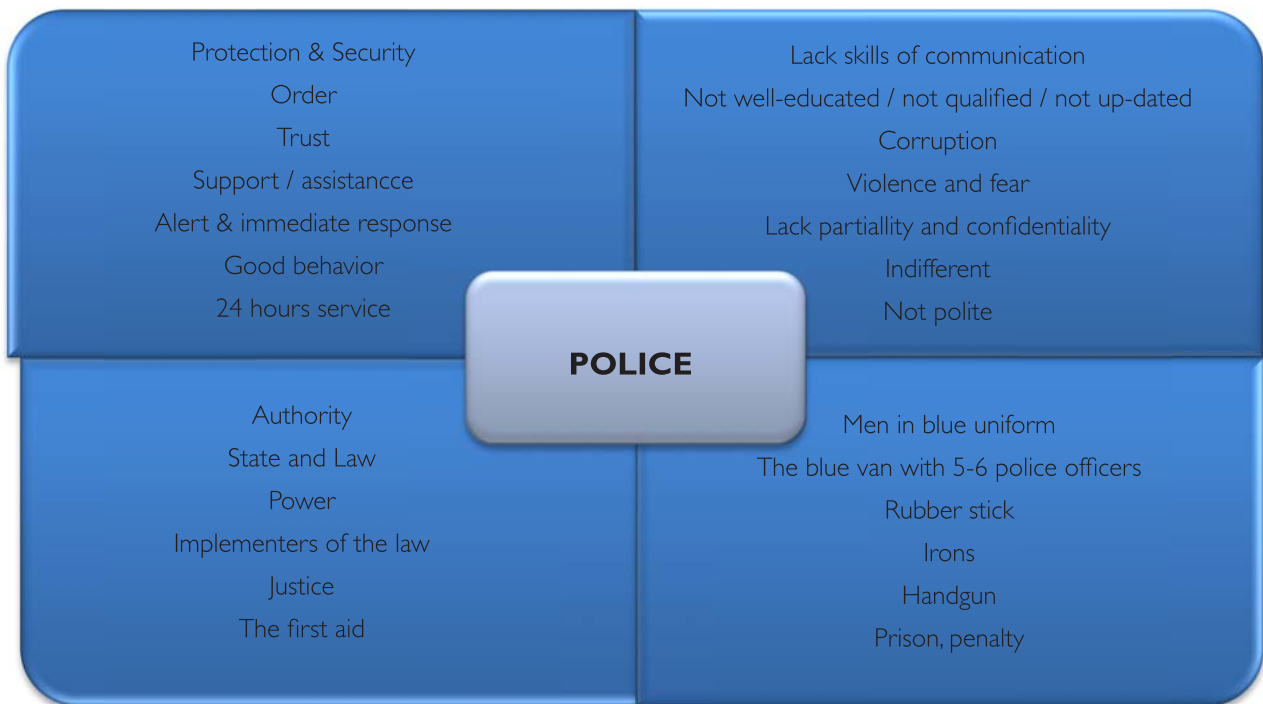
This section will provide an overview on general public opinion on the Police, followed by their perception on the role of the Police in the issue of domestic violence, organization of ASP in regard to domestic violence, cooperation of ASP with other actors, success / effectiveness of ASP and barriers and triggers, and needs and suggestions for the future.

3.3.1. General public opinion on Police

During the in-depth discussion, participants of urban and rural community were asked to express their free associations when the term “police” was mentioned.

It was evident that their associations refer to the Police as an umbrella authority which encompasses various areas such as traffic police, investigation of crimes, public order, taxation police, etc.

FIGURE I
FREE ASSOCIATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS IN REGARD TO THE POLICE



Police is perceived by the urban and rural community of these five districts as an authority which provides protection, security, order and implementation of laws, which is alert and deliver 24 hours service. At the same time there are some participants who express their concerns / reservations toward the police. According to them, it is self-understood that the Police, in its role to keep order and peace, becomes sometimes frightening and violent. In addition, participants express dualistic opinions about police officers (good behaviour and supportive, and indifferent or not polite).

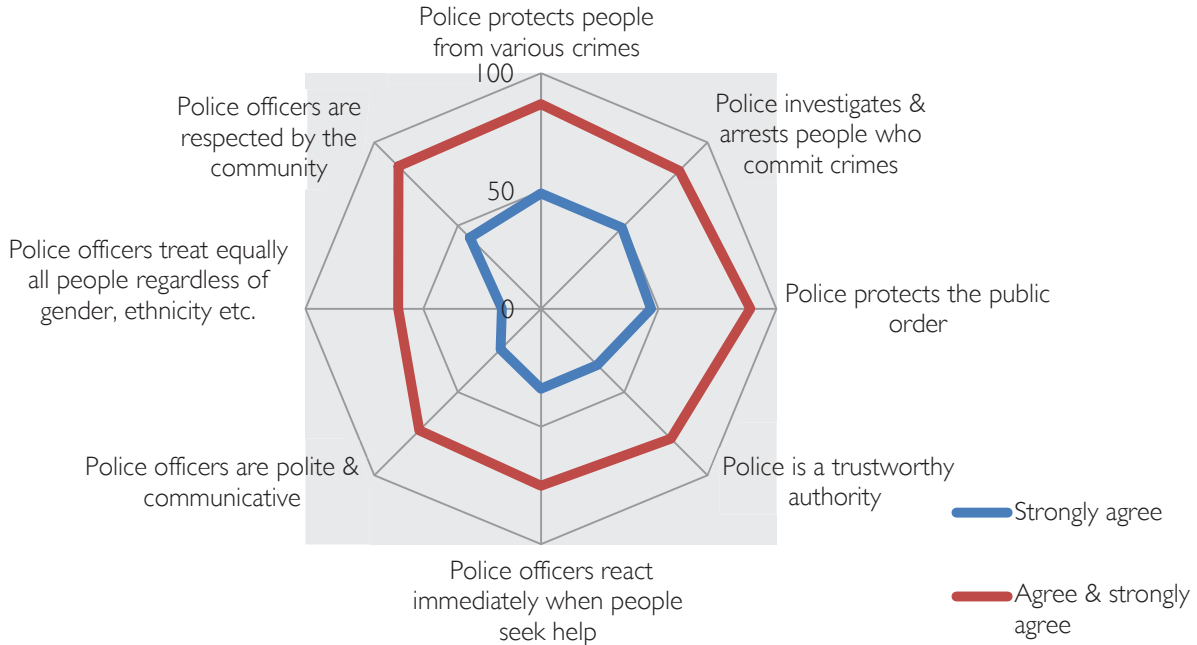
Respondents were asked if they agree with a list of statements regarding the Albanian State Police, by using a scale from 1-4 (1 means don't agree at all, and 4 means strongly agree). The following chart presents the public image of the Albanian State Police, based in the percentage of those who “strongly agree” vs. the sum of “agree” and “strongly agree” with such statements.

7-9 out of 10 respondents have positive opinion about ASP.

90% of them agree that police protects the public order, 87% that protects people from various crimes, 83% that investigates and arrests people who commit crimes, 75% that immediately reacts when people seek help. 78% of

them agree that police is a trustworthy authority, 86% that police officers are respected by the community, 73% that police officers are polite and communicative, and 63% of them agree that police officers treat equally all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, etc.

**CHART 16
PUBLIC IMAGE OF ALBANIAN STATE POLICE**



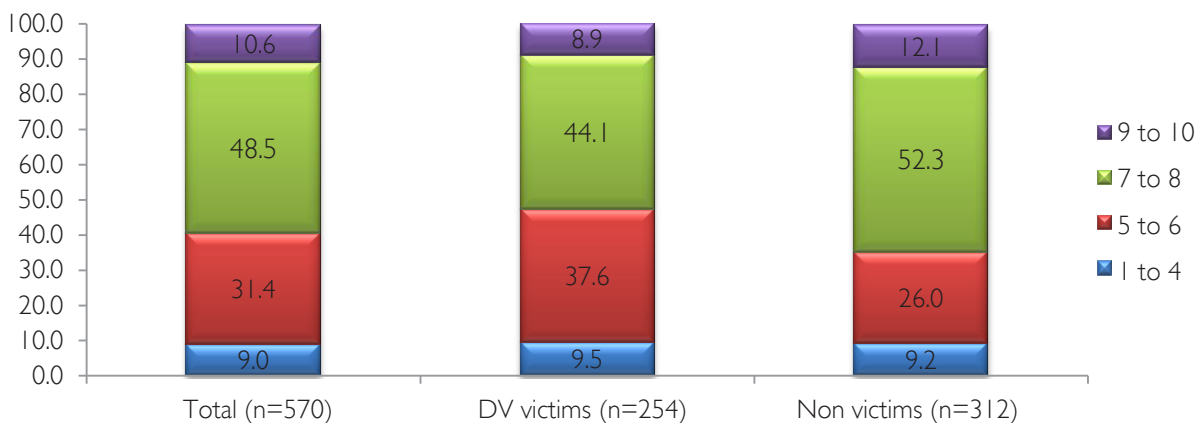
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Police taking into consideration their personal and family experience with Police in general, by using a scale from 1 to 10 (1 means totally unsatisfied and 10 means totally satisfied).

The average satisfaction level of total respondents is at 6.6

60% of respondents are more than the average satisfied with the role of police in general. 53% of domestic violence victims vs. 65.4% non-victims are more than the average satisfied with the role of police in general.

There are no significant differences on the degree of satisfaction with the general role of Police based on gender, age, residence (urban vs. rural).

**CHART 17
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH THE ROLE OF ASP**



Some statements from urban and rural respondents:

“There was one case when I was asked to provide information about a group of thieves in my village. They were very professional and correct. At that time I was 13 years old.” (Male, 17 years old, Vlora rural)

“Even in normal routine checks they treat us disrespectfully.” (Male, 25-35 years old, Tirana, urban)

“Due to a quarrel with her parents, a close friend of mine once left her home. The parents were very concerned and called the police. The police officers behaved in a cold manner and said that 48 hours had to pass before starting to look for her, and they didn’t make an effort to calm down the parents” (Female, 14-18 years old, Shkodra urban)

“One evening, a girl was violated by a guy and the Police immediately arrived and accompanied the guy to the Commissariat. I was very satisfied with the reaction of the police” (Female, 14-18 years old, Tirana, urban)

“The traffic police officers are highly corrupted. They always ask for money instead of imposing the official penalty” (Female, 35-55 years old, Tirana, urban)

“Two years ago, police officers accompanied my brother and cousins to interrogate them about trafficking in narcotics, together with other people from our village. They behaved very well with my brother and cousins, but we heard complaints from the others.” (Female, 22 years old, Korca, rural)

“There are cases when we violate the law and the traffic police officers tolerate and just give us advice.” (Male, 36-55 years old, Vlora urban)

“Once my son was accompanied to the police commissariat for hours due to a fight between classmates and we were notified only in the evening that he was there. They interrogated him without our presence or the presence of the psychologist or a lawyer. Even though he was hurt, medical assistance was not provided” (Female, 36-55 years old, Korça urban)

3.3.2. Community’s perception on the role of the Albanian State Police in domestic violence

Urban and rural community was asked to express their opinion about the role of the Police in regard to domestic violence issues. The most of participants perceive Police as the authority which immediately reacts and goes to the domestic violence scene, arrests, and interrogates the perpetrator. Almost half of respondents see the role of the Police in such cases as interrogative and investigative. The community perceive Police as an authority which has less role in giving information to the victims about legal aspects / legal counselling, assisting the victims in preparing the petition to the court / persecution, or in sending expert staff on the scene.

TABLE 18	Total (n=570)
PERCEIVED ROLE OF THE POLICE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES	
Immediately goes on the domestic violence scene	77.6
Arrests the perpetrator	64.2
Interrogates the perpetrator	55.0
Investigates the case	49.5
Interrogates / collects information from the victim/s	48
Records information provided by the victims/s	18.1
Sends expert staff on the scene (psychologist / social worker etc))	14.5
Assists the victim to file an application to the court / prosecutor	13.2
Accompanies the victim/s to the health centres for medical services	12.8
Gives information about the legal aspects / legal counselling (victim / perpetrator)	6.2
Consistently follows the case	11.4
Don't know	1.1

Furthermore the in-depth discussion with urban and rural community discovered that they expect Police to imprison the perpetrator and to be accompanied by a psychologist when going to the household and/or interrogating the victim. Others expect the Police to negotiate and resolve the conflict without proceeding with the effective legal measures.

“The Zone Inspector is usually the one who goes on the scene, collects information about the conflict, and follows all the other steps. Police supports the release of a protection order for the victim. They closely cooperate with the Prosecutor and the Court.” (Female, 35-55 years old, Korça)

“When they get a referral, they immediately go on the incident scene, advice the parties, and, depending on the seriousness of the case, they take further measures..” (Male, 35-55 years old, Vlora, urban)

“They respond to domestic violence with additional violence when accompanying the perpetrator to the commissariat” (Male, 19-24 years old, Korça, urban)

“They should protect the victim, arrest the perpetrator, and not to allow him for further abuse; not to underestimate the incident and just ask for reconciliation between the couple” (Female, 25-35 years old, Tirana, urban)

From the in-depth interviews with victims, they expressed much higher expectations toward the Police which go beyond the areas of Police responsibilities including immediate sheltering in extreme crisis situations, emergency food supplies, housing, and employment.

“The police officers were very polite and professional. They welcome me and make me feel comfortable, but they fill in endless administrative papers which I don’t need. I need to find a place to live, to find a job, to feel safe.... I need the support of the state, Police...” (Female victim, Durres)

“I did have support from the social centre, but I expect more from the state: housing, my husband to pay the financial obligation, etc.” (Female victim, Shkodra)

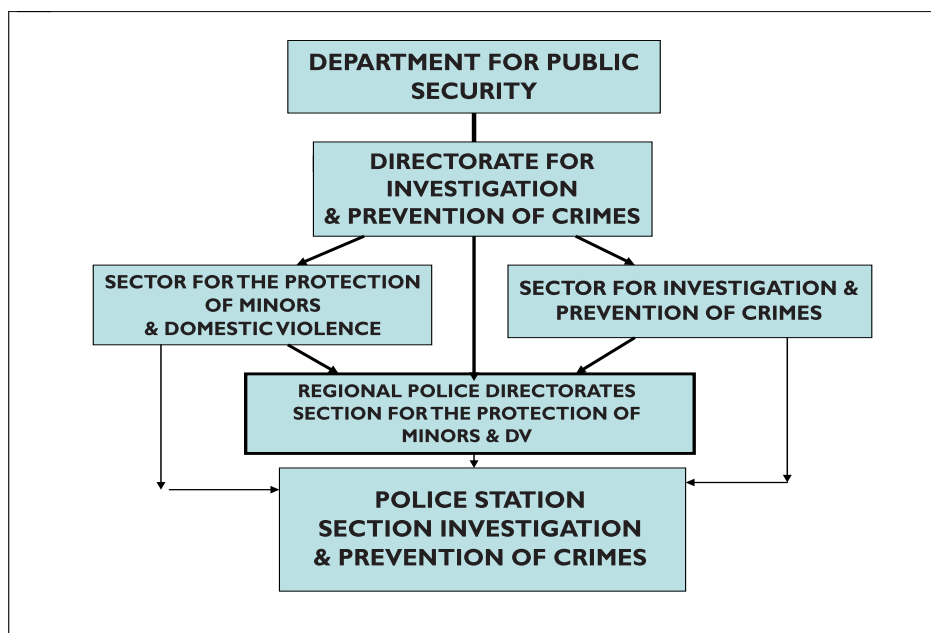
“The Police was quick in responding to my case. They do what they can... but how can they provide me a job, when most of the population is unemployed” (Female victim, Vlora)

3.3.3. Organizational structure within ASP responsible for the Domestic Violence

Based on the interviews with police officers, it was clear that there is a well-structured and functional vertical organization and reporting line regarding domestic violence within the Albanian State Police.

At the central level, there is a Child Protection and Domestic Violence Sector (which consists of 1 head of sector and 2 experts) and at the regional level, there are Child Protection and Domestic Violence Sections. Different staffing standards are in place in these sections of various regions, taking into consideration the number of reported domestic violence incidents. In the section of Tirana RPD, there are four employees: 1 head of section and 3 experts; in Fieri RPD, there are two employees: 1 head of section and 1 expert; while in the remaining 10 RPDs (Shkodra, Dibra, Kukës, Lezha, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Korça, Berat, Durrës and Elbasan), there is only one employee within this section.

In total, the country counts 43 police commissariats covering 482 zones. Each zone is covered by one Zone Inspector; therefore, in total, there are 482 Zone Inspectors who are the frontline staff responding to domestic violence cases, among other areas of responsibilities they have.

FIGURE 2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WITHIN ASP RESPONSIBLE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

According to the interviews with various hierarchic levels of ASP, the pyramid reporting line is regular on daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

Different type of information are collected for statistical purposes (and not only): information about victims' profile (name, surname, age, if repeated incident, gender, residence, education, marital status, relation with the perpetrator; minority, citizenship), information about the perpetrator (arrested, unknown, wanted, etc.) and types of criminal offence. These statistics are updated and reported monthly and quarterly at different levels.

"From the statistics, we noticed that there is seasonality on domestic violence incidence. During summer or Christmas when many emigrants come back home and find surprising family situations which lead to domestic violence incidents" (Police officer, Tirana)

3.3.4. Cooperation of Albanian State Police with other stakeholders regarding domestic violence

Albanian State Police cooperates with various actors to address, investigate, and reduce domestic violence. The information below provides point of views and opinions from various actors based in their experience of collaboration.

Cooperation ASP - MOLSAEO

Both parties acknowledge that the cooperation is satisfactory. The ministry recognizes the police as its crucial partner in preventing and combating domestic violence.

Police provides quarterly statistics to MOLSAEO about the number of reported domestic violence cases and requests for protection orders.

MOLSAEO includes the ASP in all legislative initiatives and other activities such as trainings on gender equality and domestic violence with Regional Police Directorates (*"Protection, treatment, and management of domestic violence cases at the local level based on the legislation and on the establishment of a coordinated response to this phenomenon"*).

Based on the action plan of the Strategy for Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence (2011-2015), MOLSAEO has planned ongoing trainings about violence towards women and domestic violence for the employees in the police, healthcare, court, prosecution, bailiff service office, media etc.

Cooperation ASP – Ministry of Health / health care units

The cooperation between ASP and the Ministry of Health is mostly applicable in the grass-root level: healthcare centres and regional public healthcare directorates.

Officials of the Ministry of Health say the institution they represent plays a supportive role to respond to domestic violence, by setting up the necessary capacities which provide medical support in emergency healthcare units and healthcare units in Municipalities and communes.

Police officers accompany the victims to the healthcare centres when medical aid is needed. The medical staff refers the case to the police only with the consent of the victim.

“The healthcare centres often don’t provide to the victims the necessary medical report, which is crucial in court hearings” (NPO representative)

“Healthcare institutions such as: family planning centres, health care units, hospitals, women counselling centres, are places where the population has ongoing contacts and often the first contact is with the health care employees” (Ministry of Health)

“Health personnel refers cases to police (when it’s required), they refer them for shelter, legal counselling etc. Thanks to trainings provided in 6 regions (meanwhile there are planned trainings in 6 other regions), the staff is enabled to do a proper identification of violated people. In addition, a lot has to be done to change the mentality of people. In general, they do not admit that they are violated.” (Ministry of Health)

Cooperation ASP – Ministry of Justice / Bailiffs Office

In the context of cooperation, officials of the Ministry of Justice state there is memorandum of understanding between the Bailiff’s Office and the Albanian State Police. The Memorandum was approved in 2005 and updated in 2011. The agreement regulates the cooperation by defining the rights and obligations of each party. Based on the in-depth interviews, it is evident that police provides its support to the bailiffs office anytime their support is required to execute the EPO / PO.

“There has always been a prompt cooperation from police. In almost every case, court decisions are implemented with the assistance of the police, as it foreseen by law” (Ministry of Justice)

Few police officers claim there is no actual cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, because the free legal assistance for the victims is mainly provided by the NPOs.

There are many complaints from police officers towards the Bailiff’s Office regarding the execution of protection orders / emergency protection orders.

“The Bailiff’s office is not supportive. It is their primary task to execute the court’s decision and we, as Police, to assist them when it’s needed.” (Police officer)

“There are cases when the protection orders are executed through private bailiffs, so the victims should pay for this service” (Police Officer)

Cooperation ASP – Judiciary system (courts & prosecutor)

According to the ASP interviewees, the cooperation with courts has improved in the last years, due to the direct cooperation related to the role of the police in the framework of protection orders. However, there are some remarks about the applicability of specific court’s decision.

"A house is 70 m² and the court decides that the perpetrator should not be less than 50 m distant from the victim. This is an inapplicable decision. The judges don't consider such issues carefully." (Police Officers)

"There is cooperation courts and the police, but it is not very visible. We release a decision and the police should execute it accordingly..." (Civil Judge)

"Personally I can't see as a solution or protection measure to leave both the plaintiff and the defendant within the same house during the protection order timeline. In such cases, we have to plan a police officer to guard in the corridor... But sometimes we can't find other solutions, there are no services in place..." (Civil Judge)

"Police officers do not serve as witnesses in court hearings when it's necessary..." (NPO representative)

"There are cases when victims become subject to prejudice in court hearings if they are well-dressed or they don't seem humble. The judges ironically say they look fine and there is no evidence they have been violated." (NPO representative)

"The cooperation with the prosecutor is less frequent, since they deal with cases of victims with physical injuries." (Police officer)

"The cooperation with the Police is quite good. Of course the State Police has a different organizational structure to which we need to adapt i.e. there are cases when we delegate a case to a police officer who, for work purposes, might be transferred and this affects the efficiency and quick response..." (Vice Prosecutor)

Cooperation ASP – Local government

According to the ASP interviewees, the cooperation with the local government is crucial in the response to domestic violence, and step by step the municipalities are building the capacities to set up the proper structure to fulfil their role and responsibilities.

The cooperation is settled at the local level with all the Regional Police Directorates in all municipalities where this mechanism is established (recently with the Municipality of Tirana).

Municipalities have close cooperation with the Police who provide them full information about domestic violence cases.

In general, Municipalities have a wider cooperation with NPOs, as a result of the fact that NPOs usually provide shelter, counselling, legal support for victims of domestic violence, and they also fill the gaps that Municipalities have in the provision of services for victims of domestic violence.

Police officers from various police commissariats claim there is willingness from municipalities to cooperate but there are limited capacities in human and financial resources, limited official working hours, not functional 24 hours toll-free phone line, etc. which make their work with the cases more difficult.

"There are cases of tangible cooperation between our police commissariat and Municipality to coordinate the provision of needed services for the victims such as sheltering, counselling, etc." (Zone Inspectors, Vlora)

"All other authorities close at 4:00 pm but the police is open when the domestic violence incidents happen. At midnight everyone is closed..." (Expert for Crime Investigation & Prevention, Tirana)

Similarly, NPOs claim that:

"The municipality must be the coordinator, should establish social centres, but the budget coming from the central government has decreased quite a lot while legislative demands are always increasing".

"Durrës municipality and the Mayor himself have been very willing and supportive. All these years I work with vulnerable groups, I can witness that they are considered as a priority. There is house available for emergency

cases (the rent is paid by the municipality). As far as I'm informed, the municipality is planning to have common apartments, similarly to the Italian experience, for violated women"

The interviewed representatives from the four municipalities, state that the cooperation with ASP is satisfactory and productive.

"We refer cases to Police or they provide us information about cases of domestic violence. Also, the Police is a member of the multidisciplinary team and acts within its area of responsibilities..." (Municipality of Vlora)

"We refer cases to the police and police refers to us, and we coordinate our job to solve and support domestic violence cases. Usually, we assist women who find difficulties in approaching the police due to the public opinion. In such cases, we prepare the petition for PO, accompany the victim during court hearings, or shelters" (Municipality of Shkodra)

"There is a good cooperation; I don't know what else can be improved in such case. Anytime we need their collaboration, we call them. Police has been very willing and prompt to respond to our request." (Municipality of Durres)

"We do have a good cooperation with the police. We coordinate together in cases when domestic violence victims need sheltering, even temporary one, or according to the needs of that individual case" (Municipality of Korça)

The cooperation with communes is described as more challenging, since there is no Gender Specialist or Social Administrator, while the ASP covers the whole territory of the country.

Cooperation ASP – Regional Education Directorate

Police officers reported they do have cooperation with the Regional Education Directorates jointly with NPOs and/or other actors. The main area of cooperation is in organizing joint awareness raising activities in schools.

Police officers say they cooperate with schools. Activities are organized where police officers, during school classes, have shared information about domestic violence, its influence in the society, Albanian laws etc., with the aim of increasing awareness of the pupils about the phenomenon and reporting.

"In cooperation with the municipality and schools, we have initiated some meetings with pupils to provide information and increase awareness about domestic violence issues" (Police Officer)

Some zone inspectors say their presence in schools is done on daily basis and they have a very close cooperation with teachers and pupils. Some others say schools should be the ones which should plan such awareness raising classes and the police is available to take part as well.

One of the criticisms, made especially by NPOs, relates to the limited number of psychologists in schools. Psychologists are needed to cope with the diversity of problems that the pupils might have. According to police officers and NPOs, reporting for problematic cases is initiated mainly by teachers and rarely from the psychologist.

Cooperation ASP – NPOs

All police officers reported cooperation with various NPOs in their regions such as: National Shelter in Kamza, "Sot për të ardhmen" and the "Social Centre For Girls And Women" in Durrës, the social centre and shelter "Vatra" and "Aulona" in Vlora, "Kennedy" Foundation, "Dorka," and "Gruaja Korçare" associations in Korça, "Gruaja tek gruaja", "Hapat e lehtë" associations, SOS Children's Village – Family Strengthening programme in Shkodra, Center for Legal Civic Initiatives, Human Rights in Democracy Centre, Useful to Albanian Women, Counselling Centre for Women and Girls, Women's Association "Refleksione" in Tirana, "Tjetër Vizion" in Elbasan, etc.

The cooperation with NPOs consists in various activities: trainings, raising awareness activities, and direct services such as: information on procedures and available services, free legal assistance, psychological counselling, health support, shelter, vocational trainings, intermediation for employment, 24 hours toll-free helpline, etc.

Such close cooperation was evident during the interviews because the parties were mentioning personal names of each other.

“The strong point of cooperation between Police and NPOs is that they provide services that the local government or other responsible authorities don’t provide... They are a great support for the case management, a precious help for the victims” (Police Officer)

“In practice the free legal assistance is provided only by the lawyers of NPOs...” (Both Police Officer & NPO representative)

“NPOs have complementary services, what the state is not providing now to the victims...” (NPO representative)

“Thanks to NPOs the victims have some shelters to stay even without the protection order being in place yet...” (Police Officer)

“The police are the main referral body for victims or we report cases to them. Together we coordinate the work how to support and resolve cases, according to their specific situation.” (Shelter)

NPOs overall acknowledge that there is a good cooperation with Police, however there is always room for improvement, according to them. Some of them express some concerns:

“Our direct cooperation with the police is either for referral of cases or for transportation and accompanying the victims to the hospital. We ask for their cooperation almost every two days. They are always available and never denied their support.” (Shelter representative)

“In general, the cooperation with ASP is good. One major concern is the high fluctuation of the staff dealing with domestic violence. Once an expert gets fully accustomed to the relevant work, s/he is transferred...” (NPO representative)

“Often we ask the police to prepare the petition for protection order for victims that we assist. It happens that they underestimate the seriousness of cases. They are not willing to start filling in the form unless the victim is disfigured...” (NPO representative)

“There is always room for improvement. For instance, all police commissariats can inform their own employees and the police officers can inform the families that there is a counselling line where they can call and talk to us.” (NPO representative)

Cooperation ASP – community

According to the interviewed police officers, different raising awareness activities have been organised in primary and secondary schools: to provide information about domestic violence issues, protection of minors, and role of police in the community. According to them, there is an increased awareness which has also contributed to the increase of official reporting. However no large-scale activity with community members is organized due to lack of funds, as well as lack of human and logistic resources. In addition, gathering the community in a well-coordinated activity and motivating them to participate is challenging. Nevertheless the Zone Inspectors try to inform them on individual basis.

“Seminars with Roma and Egyptian community members have been organised to inform them about the strategy for the integration of Roma community, registration of children in civil state office, and domestic violence issue” (Police officer, Korça)

“Seminars with Roma and Egyptian community members have been organised to inform them about the strategy for the integration of Roma community, registration of children in civil state office, and domestic violence issue” (Police officer, Korça)

Police officers claim that the community is not really proactive in officially reporting domestic violence. There are different reasons behind; however the increase of official reporting has been noticed in the last 3-4 years, and not only in the big cities. The most problematic areas for reporting are Kukës and Dibra, as well as rural areas.

During in-depth exploration of urban and rural community's attitudes and behaviours, self-criticism about their passive role was evident especially in addressing domestic violence. In addition, it is the community itself which aggravates the victim's situation: stigmatization, prejudice, blaming the victim, abandonment, etc.

"Domestic violence is happening within the household. It's necessary that someone informs the police, otherwise we can't serve the community..." (Police officers)

"Victims withstand violence for a long time and they address to us only in extreme cases... How can we help, if the neighbours don't inform us?" (Police officer)

"We have done a lot to raise awareness. We have distributed leaflets, but people are lazy to read. What remains is the face-to-face communication. And in general, the main problem in reporting and addressing the issue is the attitude: this is not my problem and I'm not interested in who provides help..." (NPO representative)

"In my village, the community is passive; they don't give any support in such cases. Just gossips..." (Female, 17 years old, Durrës rural)

"We still believe that if we report the incident happening to our neighbour, relative, friend we will be labelled as spies, similarly to the communism times... If the victim is a female, we think she most probably has done something wrong and that's why the husband beats her... The whole community lives in a problematic mentality; we follow the law of silence and indifference..." (Males focus group, 25-35 years old, Shkodra)

"If my neighbour is having a violent quarrel within the couple, I don't feel safe to report the case. The police might come and say to him who referred the case, and the next day I find my neighbour asking me why I did that... I don't want to have such problems..." (Males focus groups, 25-35 years old, Tirana)

3.3.5. Awareness and perception of the community in the effectiveness of ASP cooperation with other actors in regard to domestic violence

Urban and rural respondents said the main authorities that Police cooperates with include: the judiciary system (courts and prosecutors), central and local government, and the community itself.

TABLE 19 AWARENESS ON POLICE COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS	Spontaneous awareness	Total awareness (spontaneous & prompted)
Juridical System	59.5	79.4
Central Government	36.6	49.1
Municipality / Commune	29.7	47.4
Community	14.3	48.3
Health Services	13.1	39.3
Civil Society / NPOs	11.0	28.4
Shelters	8.7	24.5
Police don't cooperate with any authority in regard to domestic violence	1.3	1.3
Don't know	9.3	9.3

According to the respondents, Police cooperation is effective with almost all institutions, but mostly with the judiciary system, central government, and the community.

TABLE 20 EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICE COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS	Very effective	Effective	Not so effective	Not effective at all	Don't know
Central Government	54.6	39.7	4.3	1.1	0.3
Local Government	41.1	50.2	8.0	0.4	0.3
Civil Society / NPOS	36.6	52.1	10.0	0.5	0.7
Shelters	36.2	44.7	16.3	0.0	2.8
Health Services	50.1	37.9	10.3	0.9	0.9
Judicial System	64.5	27.4	7.5	0.0	0.7
Community	53.8	35.2	9.2	0.8	1.0

3.3.6. Effectiveness of the Albanian State Police

Community perspective

Based on their personal experience or their personal network experience (friends and family), 3 out of 4 respondents stated that police is effective and immediately reacts in cases of domestic violence; 2 out of 3 respondents stated that police is effective in supporting victims; and 56.1% stated that police is effective in preventing this phenomenon.

TABLE 21 POLICE EFFECTIVENESS IN RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	Very effective	Effective	Ineffecti- ve	Totally ineffecti- ve	Don't know
Immediate reaction to domestic violence incidents	18.5	55.0	22.4	3.3	0.9
Support / assistance given to victims of domestic violence	24.0	39.8	31.6	3.2	1.4
Prevention of domestic violence	12.4	43.7	32.8	8.1	2.9

Nevertheless, some participants from the urban and rural community, during the in-depth discussions, expressed some reserves in regard to Police effectiveness:

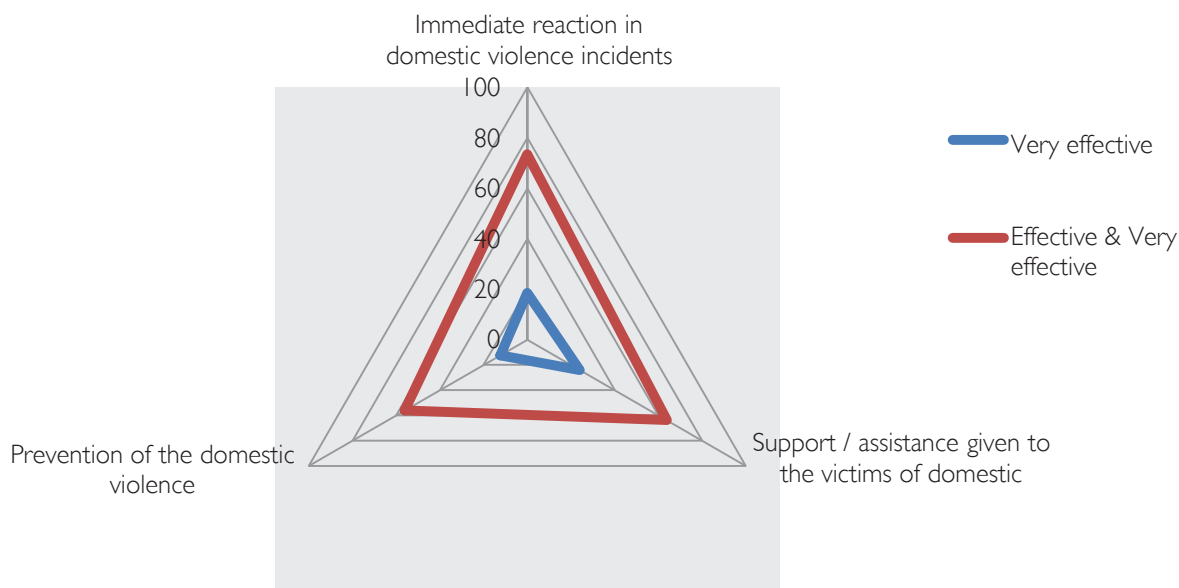
"I don't believe they are 100% effective. There are cases in my village in which the police just takes the evidence of the case and don't follow it ..." (Female, 25-35 years, Korca)

"The Police is very correct and respects its own procedures..." (Female 14-18 years old, Tirana)

"Police officers are not effective in properly addressing domestic violence incidents. How can they be? They are aggressive themselves. I live in a building with many police officer neighbours... and I know they abuse their wives" (Female, 19-24 years, Vlora)

"So far, I can say that Police is very successful. They come immediately..." (Male, 35-55 years old Korça rural)

CHART 18
POLICE EFFECTIVENESS IN RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



“In the majority of the cases, they close the discussion with the victim saying that it is acceptable that the husband slap his wife sometimes” (Female, 36-55 years, Tirana)

“They often neglect the cases. There was this case when a woman reported her son as a perpetrator. And the police officers instead of taking measures kept asking her if she was sure to sue her son...” (Males 25-35 years, Shkodra urban)

Victims’ perspective

During this study, in both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study, we have discussed in total with 733 individuals from the community. Out of them, 23 have been victims of domestic violence, who had reported their case to the Police. In the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews were supported mainly by the mediation of NPOs and shelters that support victims of domestic violence in different districts. The selection was random and with the approval of the victims. In the quantitative phase, all the interviewers were asked about their personal experience with domestic violence; and those who stated they had experienced domestic violence, were further asked if they have reported the incident, where, etc.

These people, victims of domestic violence, are within the age range of 14-55 years old, and 18 out of 23 were female. Most of them have experienced continuous violence for years and multiple types of violence occurring simultaneously. Out of these 23 victims: 21 cases stated physical abuse, 2 cases stated sexual abuse, 18 stated emotional abuse, and 21 cases stated psychological abuse.

“Since we have been engaged, he has maltreated me. But I was young and I didn’t understand. I thought he was somehow jealous because of love. He always felt inferior to me, and later, almost every day, he came home drunk, and we argued continuously and he threatened me, sometimes violated me. 10 years ago, I got the courage to ask for divorce, but our relatives tried to reconcile us. At that time, it was not so clear that there were structures to report domestic violence. Now that the children have become adults, I couldn’t stand any longer....” (Female, 46 years old, divorced)

“We have always argued in my family, especially with my brother. I think he was suspicious for my sexual orientation. But when I told the truth to my family, that I am homosexual, my brother punched me and then my

father. My parents mainly used psychological abuse: they insulted me, threatened my partner, and then they cut every financial support, even the things that legally belonged to me..." (Male, 22 years old, single)

Half of these cases have reported the issue to the Police themselves and in other cases someone from the personal network (friends or relatives).

In half of the cases, the means of reporting the incident was the toll-free Police line (129) and within the same day of the incident.

Four out of them have been to the court, 3 have been protected through a Protection Order. Furthermore 6 of them received support from NPOs (2 in shelters).

Half of them have received legal assistance, social, and psycho-emotional support, and in 2 cases they received health services.

The table below shows some of the actions that police took in the cases of these victims.

TABLE 22 RESPONSE OF POLICE TOWARD REPORTED CASES (a)	n=23 cases
Immediately went to the domestic violence scene	9
Arrested the perpetrator	5
Interrogated the perpetrator	5
Investigated the case	6
Interrogated / collected information from the victim/s and other witnesses	10
Recorded the information provided by the victims/s	6
Sent the expert staff to the scene (psychologist / social worker etc)	6
Assisted the victim to file an application to the court / prosecutor	3
Accompanied the victim/s to the health centres for medical services	2
Gave information about the legal aspects / legal counselling	5
Other (advices for reconciliation, accompanying to social services)	4

(a) The figures represent number of cases

Most of these victims said they were satisfied with the prompt/ quick response of Police in addressing their case. Some of them are satisfied with the behaviour and communication of police officers, others are not.

Various reasons stand behind their dissatisfaction:

Police arrested and "easily" released the perpetrator; police officers were not polite and supportive to the victim; they were not committed to punish the perpetrator; they didn't give information about services in place or rights of the victim. In addition the victims claim that they were mainly supported by the services provided by the NPOs instead of Police.

From the observation and discussion with these victims, it was evident that their dissatisfaction relates to their higher expectations towards the services that police should provide, which goes beyond their scope of responsibilities, i.e. provision of sheltering, intermediation for employment, etc.

Perspective of other actors, including Albanian State Police

Albanian State Police developed an Action Plan in September 2011 for the implementation of the Action Plan of the NSGE-VAWDV 2011-2015, which sets three key strategic objectives along with the respective activities till the end of 2012, as follows:

Objective 1: Reduction of gender based violence

- To always inform and orient victims on protection measures provided by the law of domestic violence with the scope of preventing and reducing domestic violence
- To implement the Criminal legislation for all issues related to domestic violence
- To take measures for accurate filling in of petitions for issuance of protection orders or emergency protection orders
- To take measures by guaranteeing the execution of court decisions on POs / EPOs
- To establish contacts and cooperation with local government units and to ensure representation in the Steering Committee of Municipalities and Multidisciplinary Technical Teams in the framework of the establishment nationwide cross-referral system
- Establish cooperation with licensed NPOs to ensure legal and social service provision

Objective 2: On-going training of police officers

- To assess the needs for further trainings and qualification focusing on legislative amendments related to domestic violence; and standard procedures on treatment of domestic violence victims

Objective 3: systematic data collection according to categories of gender based violence

- To take measures for accurate filling in of the respective registers and ensure regular reporting

The outcome of qualitative discussion in in-depth interviews, focus groups, and workshops with authorities and civil society is that Police plays a key role in addressing domestic violence at the grass-root level. ASP is the direct / first contact in most of the cases of domestic violence.

Police make the utmost to be successful and effective in its role. But their effectiveness is influenced by the combination of various internal and external factors, such as: service provision, interagency cooperation, legislation framework, the human, financial, logistic resources, personal attitudes, skills and capacities of police officers, attitudes of victims and community as a whole.

More detailed information will be described in the coming section (3.3.7 *Triggers and barriers in the effectiveness of Albania State Police*).

Police officers' self-assessment is quite in accordance with what other authorities stated about their effectiveness.

"Police does its utmost to respond properly to the cases. If previously it was perceived that if one goes to the police they would be rude with them, now it's the opposite here in Durrës. The delivered trainings to the police officers have resulted in positive impact in their professionalism regarding domestic violence incidents..." (Durrës Municipality)

"Success of the Police ... if they would change their personal patriarchal attitudes toward domestic violence, and they would have the appropriate educational level, would be well-informed and trained on the topic, I believe there would be more effectiveness." (NGO Tirana)

"Together we have achieved successes in investigation, prevention, and imprisonment of perpetrators" (NPO Korça)

"In the majority of the cases where we worked jointly, results were achieved. However, sometimes, the success is conditioned by the attitude and behaviour of the victims themselves, since they often withdraw the petition." (Shkodra Municipality)

“The police make the outmost to support victims but it has a limited role by law...” (NPO representative)

“Police is the only authority which is available 24/7 ... no other authority is working more than 8 hours/day. Police is the one answering to the victims' need for support in the middle of the night” (NPO Tirana)

“Even in cases of repetitive incidents, Police still tries to reconcile the couple.” (NPOs)

“Police respond when the cases are disclosed. Within this context, we can mention that we prevent the phenomenon by preventing the further aggravation of the reported situation” (Police Officer)

“Domestic violence has been reduced. The cases reported to Police have been successfully addressed in 80-90% of the cases.... However, we have to take into account that the phenomenon is hidden and not reported; and there are challenges in coordinating interagency intervention and response” (Police officers)

“The Child Protection and Domestic Violence Section is focused in capacity-building of front-line police officers, whose majority are men, to increase awareness on gender based violence and victims' needs... Through on-going efforts, positive changes have been achieved in the impartial and professional attitude of male police officers in the treatment of female victims... However, there is still room for improvement...” (Police officer)

3.3.7. Triggers and barriers in the effectiveness of Albania State Police

This section will provide a compilation of findings from all target groups in regard to both contributing and inhibiting factors which influence the effectiveness of Albanian State Police to deliver services to address, investigate, and reduce the domestic violence phenomenon and improve the coordination between ASP and other actors to ensure adequate treatment of domestic violence cases.

The information below shows the perceived strengths and weaknesses as mentioned by various actors: police officers, other authorities, NPOs, the urban and rural community and victims of domestic violence too, in regard to:

- Albanian State Police capacities
 - Human resources
 - Infrastructure, logistical and financial resources
- Other factors
 - Legislation
 - Service provision: others and ASP
 - Interagency cooperation

Capacities of the Albanian State Police

The strengths described are mainly the outcome of the SWOT analysis carried out with police officers and in-depth interviews with ASP, and, to some extent, in line with other stakeholders' evaluation. The weaknesses are consistent and result from all target groups.

TABLE 23 ALBANIAN STATE POLICE CAPACITIES: HUMAN RESOURCES	
Strengths / advantages	Weaknesses / disadvantages
<p>Dedicated and committed police officers</p> <p>Well-knowledgeable Zone Inspectors in regard to the community of their area. Good connection of Zone Inspectors with the community</p> <p>Impartiality in treatment of various profiles of victims and perpetrators</p> <p>Open-minded police officers / no prejudices</p> <p>Improved communication skills to deal with different demanding situations</p> <p>Information about domestic violence included in the curriculum of the police academy</p> <p>On-going trainings</p> <p>Overall professional and skilled police officers</p> <p>Well-informed and good knowledge on procedures and laws on domestic violence</p> <p>Good internal cooperation and functional organization structure</p> <p>Trust of victims to police officer for reporting and following the cases (increasing during the years)</p>	<p>Overloaded staff with various responsibilities and duties / lack of zone inspectors focused only on DV</p> <p>Limited number of staff (1 zone inspector dealing with everything)</p> <p>Lack of psychologists and social workers at the police commissariat level</p> <p>Continuous fluctuation of staff (transfers)</p> <p>Low number of front-line female police officers</p> <p>Lack of experience exchange with other countries' police</p>
Some additional opinions from the community, victims and NPOs on the human capacities of the police are shown below.	
<p>Brave and courageous police officers (community)</p> <p>Altruism and humanism of police officers (NPOs)</p>	<p>Not skilled enough zone inspectors to fill in the petition for POs / EPOs and low computer skills (NPOs)</p> <p>There are cases of male psychologists in RPDs who make the victims hesitate (NPOs)</p> <p>Non-ethical behaviour of some police officers (victims, community, NPOs)</p> <p>Poor communication and interviewing skills of some police officers (community & NPOs)</p> <p>Masculine and patriarchal mentality of some police officers (community & NPOs)</p> <p>They have prejudicial and discriminative attitudes toward LGBT community members</p>

“They are brave ... a lot of courage is needed to go and intervene in somebody else’s house ... they may have guns and who knows what can happen” (Female, 35-55 years old, Vlora)

“They may have had the trainings, but they are still not doing it right ...” (NPOs and community)

“Once my partner and I were arrested and sent to the commissariat. During detention, I heard many labelling and discriminative statements, such as: “do not leave those two together because... only because we were a homosexual couple...” (Male, 19-24 years old, Tirana)

The discussion on ASP capacities in terms of infrastructure, logistic, and financial resources gave the opportunity to the police officers to express their own concerns and needs which are the result of their everyday work with cases of DV victims with multiple needs (as described in table 24). Furthermore such needs are identified by NPOs and the community members as well.

TABLE 24
ASP CAPACITIES: INFRASTRUCTURE, LOGISTIC & FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Strengths / advantages	Weaknesses / disadvantages
<p>Full geographical coverage through 43 police commissariats all over the country</p> <p>Positive initiative taken with the support of Embassy of France to set up adequate child-friendly rooms in 2 police commissariats and future plans are to expand this initiative also in other police commissariats with the support of “Save the Children” as well</p>	<p>Lack of space for individual interviewing, adequate and child-friendly rooms in police commissariats to ensure accurate interrogation and privacy of DV victims and children</p> <p>Limited number of computers and other technical equipments, stationeries</p> <p>Limited available cars and fuel (personal cars are often used to respond to the community needs)</p> <p>No specifically allocated budget for domestic violence, related needs, and awareness raising activities (it is included in the overall budget of the department / sector)</p> <p>Lack of an emergency fund to DV victims’ emergent needs i.e. food supply, babies products, transportation for emergency cases, etc. (often police officers are obliged to fulfil the needs of the victims with their own money)</p> <p>Not in line with latest technology development</p>

“There are cases that police is quick, and others not. The police commissariat is not near to the villages. There is no good road infrastructure....” (Female, 36-55 years old, Durrës, rural)

“There are some special rooms for women and children only in the Regional Police Directorate of Tirana, and in the commissariat of Kamza and Kavaja” (Police Officer)

“There is only 1 PC available for 6 police officers.... How are we supposed to work?” (Police officers)

“There are many cases when the police officers themselves buy food to victims and pampers for babies with their own money ... there should be some budget from the Police, as an institution, for these cases” (NPOs)

Other factors

The work and effectiveness of ASP is influenced by other factors such as legislation, current services for victims and perpetrators, and interagency cooperation. Therefore, you may find below a description of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each of these areas, as mentioned from various actors: ASP, other authorities, NPOs, community and victims.

Other factors – Legislation and implementation

TABLE 25 LEGISLATION & IMPLEMENTATION	
Strengths / advantages	Weaknesses / disadvantages
<p>Existence of a substantial and contemporary legal framework regarding domestic violence (laws and normative acts, National Strategies on Gender Equality, Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, Employment, etc.)</p> <p>Amendments to the Law “On Measures against Violence in Family Relations,” especially the Decision of Council of Ministers No.334, dated 17.2.2011, on the establishment of the nationwide cross-referral system to address domestic violence</p> <p>Criminalization of domestic violence (Latest changes in the Criminal Code with the provisions of Article 121/a, 124/b and Article 130/a which address domestic violence issues better and provide more restrictive legal measures for the perpetrator. Now domestic violence is considered as a criminal act and as such there is a conviction with imprisonment and penalty is no more provided in the law as a legal measure)</p> <p>The law provides special services for victims such as free legal assistance, issuance of EPOs within 24 hours for minors, exclusion of plaintiff from the obligation to pay court expenses, economic assistance during the validity period of the POs, etc.</p> <p>The broad definition of “family members” by the Albanian law</p> <p>Better legal protection for minors who are perpetrators: a child under 14 years old cannot be legally prosecuted, even for a murder. If a child is over 14 years old, the level of conviction is half compared to the adult. There are certain steps which are followed: Probation Service, with conditioned convictions</p> <p>Legitimizing the Police to issue petition for protection order for the minors</p> <p>When the petition is presented by the police, the victim's wish to drop the case does not have an effect on the continuation of the judicial process</p>	<p>Changes in Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code do not go hand in hand</p> <p>The law definition of “family members” does not include same sex partners and those who are not married or cohabitating with each other (lovers or intimate partners). This is especially relevant for young people who are in a relationship and exposed to different types of domestic violence. In addition, same sex relationship is not legitimized. Family code defines the cohabitation only between man and woman. Therefore, the law does not provide legal protection about these categories.</p> <p>Beating is not clearly defined in the Criminal Code.</p> <p>Torture as a form of domestic violence is not foreseen in the Criminal Code</p> <p>Lack of sheltering of victims till an emergency protection order is in place as provided in the law (48 hours vacuum for crisis situations)</p> <p>No severe punishment of perpetrators who violate the released POs or EPOs</p> <p>The law lacks of provisions on free court expenses in case of divorce for the domestic violence victims</p> <p>Lack of public funds to implement the laws and strategies</p> <p>Limited role of Police in execution of PO and EPOs as provided by law</p> <p>Weak implementation of laws in place (a)</p>

(a) Further explanation on this regards will be described in the service provision and interagency cooperation

Other factors – Service provision

In-depth interviews with NPOs, but not only, revealed that the victim is highly supported through different support services in comparison with the support provided to the perpetrator:

The most provided support services by NPOs for the victims of domestic violence are: psychological support, medical support, shelter, intermediation for employment, professional vocational trainings, legal support, and emergency material support.

Services for perpetrators are mostly limited to counselling for specific cases or medical support in case of mental health problems.

Almost all institutions, individuals, victims of domestic violence say the most needed services for victims or domestic violence include: employment and housing. Most of the institutions state that activities to support perpetrators should be in a larger scale in cooperation with different institutions.

TABLE 26 A	
SERVICE PROVISION - OTHER INSTITUTIONS	
Strengths / advantages	Weaknesses / disadvantages
<p>NPOs active in providing services</p> <p>The national shelter for domestic violence victims</p> <p>Sheltering in rented apartments from municipalities (Korça and Durrës)</p> <p>Regional toll-free phone lines for domestic violence (Korça, Shkodra, Vlorë, and Durrës)</p> <p>The children helpline ALO 116</p> <p>Support services for children are available: organizations available for conflict resolution; rehabilitation programmes for minors in conflict with the law</p> <p>Awareness raising activities in schools, healthcare centres, community</p> <p>Training for various specialists dealing with domestic violence (bailiffs, police officers, health staff, media, magistrates)</p> <p>Strong funding support from international and UN programmes (UNDP, UNICEF, OSCE, ODIHR, World Vision, Save the Children, etc.)</p> <p>Children victims of domestic violence are always assisted by a psychologist</p>	<p>Sheltering: limited number, limited capacities in current existing ones, lack of emergency shelters and long-term shelters in North country</p> <p>Ineffective and non applicable POs (the victim and perpetrator in many cases are sharing the same premise, as there are no shelters or other alternative places where the victim could live; the husband is the perpetrator and the victim is living with her parents in law)</p> <p>Protection orders are not always issued due to lack of evidence; and not always executed by bailiff service offices</p> <p>Insufficient employment and vocational services for victims of domestic violence</p> <p>No 24/7 available services for victims</p> <p>No functional or lack of regional 24 hours toll-free phone line with links to local police, medical emergency units, and NPOs</p> <p>No free legal assistance from the state in case of divorce of the victims of domestic violence</p> <p>Few cases of victims supported with free legal assistance (to ensure the protection of the victim in court hearings)</p> <p>Healthcare centres and/or emergency units do not always provide the victim with the necessary medical report for use as evidence in court hearings for POs / EPOs</p> <p>Economic assistance for the victims not always provided or with significant delays</p> <p>Insufficient amount of the economic assistance specified for victims</p> <p>Insufficient information delivery about the procedure to be followed when domestic violence is reported</p> <p>In case of violation of the POs / EPOs from the perpetrator; there is no proper follow up through legal actions</p> <p>Lack of services for perpetrators: rehabilitation and psycho-social services (very few actions taken from NPOs)</p>

TABLE 26 B
SERVICE PROVISION- POLICE

Strengths / advantages	Weaknesses / disadvantages
<p>24/7 service available</p> <p>Quick response to each reported case (129 and police patrol)</p> <p>Intensive efforts to advice and reconcile the involved parties before further legal steps are taken</p> <p>Accurate documentation of the cases</p> <p>Collection of information about the case of domestic violence through different sources, including meetings with Local authorities</p> <p>Police officers assist the victims in preparing the petition for POs or EPOs</p> <p>ASP assist the bailiffs in execution of POs and EPOs</p> <p>Transportation and accompanying victims in healthcare centres, shelters, NPOs</p>	<p>Although the DV incident is repeated, the initial focus of police is still in the reconciliation of the involved parties</p> <p>Information on the law and protection measures is not always provided to the victims</p> <p>Confidentiality is not always kept regarding the referral source (disclosed to the perpetrator)</p> <p>There are cases that police officers are not present in court hearings when it's needed</p>

“There are not enough shelters to ensure a national geographical coverage. According to “Vatra” centre, approximately 200-300 victims were obliged to stay with the perpetrator” (NPO representative)

“Strategies for rental housing are not a good solution, because in most of the cases the victims are unemployed and they cannot afford to cover all household responsibilities” (NPO representative)

“The local government must provide an economic assistance of 3000 Lekë to the victims. However, when the victims go to their offices, they say that the budget is closed for that half of year” (NPO representative)

“The Zone Inspector was everyday coming to check if the family situation was fine ... ” (Victim, rural Shkodra)

“There is no shelter in Durrës. We are obliged to ask the shelter of Elbasan (“Tjetër Vizion”) to welcome them” (NPO representative)

“The Psychiatric Hospital provides assistance to victims suffering mental health problems for their hospitalization and treatment.” (Vlora and Shkodra police officers)

Other factors – Interagency cooperation

Various stakeholders claim that there is quite a satisfactory and regular cooperation between them. There is commitment from different authorities responsible of DV to cooperate effectively. However, each of them mentioned several difficulties which affect the quality of cooperation and therefore the proper response to the domestic violence victims.

**TABLE 27
INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

Strengths / advantages	Weaknesses / disadvantages
<p>Establishment of a nationwide cross-referral system in 20 municipalities</p> <p>Memorandums of understanding among authorities, and between authorities and NPOs</p> <p>MoUs of ASP and various actors (ministries, municipalities, NPOs, etc.)</p> <p>Increased monitoring of vertical structures within authorities which impact the quality of interagency cooperation</p> <p>Good coordinated work amongst NPOs</p> <p>Establishment of Child Protection Units in municipalities and communes</p> <p>Role of the media in raising awareness and informing the audience</p> <p>Police provides statistics to MOLSAEO and other authorities</p>	<p>Gaps in service provision especially at the Local Level</p> <p>Limited human and financial resources in various authorities</p> <p>Limited logistics and infrastructure</p> <p>Referral mechanisms are not well established</p> <p>Multidisciplinary teams are not always in place, especially for the treatment of difficult cases</p> <p>The experts in Municipalities have a broader scope of responsibilities covering social services in general including domestic violence and gender equality</p> <p>In many cases prosecutors intervene only in cases of physical damage to the victim</p> <p>Lack of joint trainings with the participation of experts from different institutions</p> <p>Lack of regular information flow during case management</p> <p>Local administrators in Child Protection Units are not taking the role to respond to the cases</p> <p>There are no specialized professional staffs to deal with different categories of victims of domestic violence (children, elderly, mental health problems, etc.)</p> <p>Unethical disclosing of personal data of victims from the media</p> <p>Community is not so pro-active in the referral of cases where there is domestic violence</p>

As a result, there is an increase of community awareness on domestic violence, official reporting of domestic violence, improved quality of case management, and more positive results.

3.4. NEEDS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

Various target groups conclude in the following needs and suggestions for further improvement in terms legislation and its implementation, interagency cooperation, and service provision for victims and perpetrators. According to them, overall, the last two areas (interagency cooperation and services) are the main ones that provide significant room for improvement.

3.4.1. Needs for improving legislation, interagency cooperation and services

**TABLE 28
NEEDS: LEGISLATION, INTERAGENCY COOPERATION, AND SERVICES**

LEGISLATION	INTERAGENCY COOPERATION
<p>The law should be more severe on punishing perpetrators and those who violate the POs / EPOs</p> <p>Changes in the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code should go hand in hand</p> <p>Legal protection measures within the frame of DV Law should be provided also for same sex partners and those who are not married or cohabitating with each other (lovers or intimate partners)</p> <p>The execution of POs and EPOs should be better defined in court decisions and implemented by the Police as the only trustful and effective authority (NPOs)</p> <p>Shelters for victims of domestic violence should be provided by law</p> <p>Divorce procedures, when initiated from victims of violence, should be free of charge and to be sanctioned by law</p> <p>Law should be rigorously implemented by all responsible authorities, especially in those cases when the protection order / emergency protection order is not abided by the perpetrator</p>	<p>Institutional cooperation should be further increased and improved</p> <p>The role of the Municipality should increase in addressing domestic violence issues</p> <p>Increase human, logistic, and financial resources dedicated to domestic violence in various institutions</p> <p>Capacity building of various experts at different levels and institutions, including media</p> <p>Specialized professional staffs to deal with different categories of victims of domestic violence (children, elderly, mental health problems, etc.)</p> <p>Municipalities should consider women who are heads of families as a primary target group for the provision of state housing</p> <p>Awareness raising activities by NPOs and local authorities should be increased</p> <p>Cooperation with the community should be strengthened by organizing informational meetings with women, men, young people, and children.</p> <p>Housing issues should be addressed only by the local government</p>

SERVICES FOR VICTIMS	SERVICES FOR PERPETRATORS
<p>There should be a dedicated public budget for DV victims</p> <p>Free legal assistance to be provided (de facto) to domestic violence victims in all steps as sanctioned by law</p> <p>Social integration of victims should be improved: employment, housing, vocational trainings. Enhance employment practices for the victims, strengthen cooperation with companies, and intensified support from the state towards this category</p> <p>Number of shelters should increase to ensure that the needs of all victims are met</p> <p>Emergency shelters to be established to immediately respond to the life-threatening situation of the victim</p> <p>Special attention should be paid to the immediate implementation of court decisions (EPOs and POs) by bailiffs</p> <p>24/7 toll-free phone lines to be established and rendered operational</p> <p>Economic subsidies for victims, especially when they are women and children</p> <p>Psychological support for victims should be strengthened</p> <p>Psychological assessment report during court processes should be mandatory</p> <p>A centre for the support of violated children should be established.</p>	<p>Rehabilitation centres, especially for alcohol and drug addiction.</p> <p>Centres for psychological treatment of perpetrators, especially for the ones who have a history of child abuse in the past</p> <p>Clinic expertise for perpetrators</p> <p>Employment support services should be provided</p>

Some needs for supportive awareness raising activities:

- Increase awareness on domestic violence by addressing cultural and patriarchal attitudes towards domestic violence as a phenomenon
- Ongoing awareness raising activities, not activities only during the 16 days of activism against gender violence (from the 25th of November to the 10th of December)
- Increase awareness on effective laws (new laws, amendments) amongst professionals and society

3.4.2. Community perspective in useful services and activities to combat domestic violence

The implementation of the effective legislation, punishment of perpetrators, more stringent laws, and having a toll-free phone number to seek assistance and advice are the main suggestions of respondents; followed by early education of young people and raising public awareness on domestic violence and the official response to it.

TABLE 29	
USEFUL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	n=570
To have a toll-free phone number for victims seeking help and advice	97.7
To have a website for victims / for the victims seeking assistance and advice	81.6
To distribute leaflets to all households	92.2
Have stronger laws / more stringent	97.5
To apply existing laws (implementation)	98.0
To train police officers on the better knowledge on victims` rights	95.0
To hold campaigns to increase community knowledge about domestic violence and the official response	96.1
Punish the perpetrators	98.1
To have curing programs / treatment (rehabilitation) for authors / abusers / violators	94.1
To educate pupils / students to respect each other (in schools)	97.1

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will present the conclusions which derive from the findings in various steps of the study (qualitative, quantitative, and desk research).

The phenomenon of domestic violence is a major concern which is experienced by almost half of the population of urban and rural areas of Tirana, Durrës, Vlora, Korça, and Shkodra districts. The victims of domestic violence include more females than males, more young people up to 24 years old than adults above 24 years old. Most of the victims have completed compulsory or secondary education, do not work, are married and live in big families with low income. As the residents of these five districts stated, domestic violence is more prevalent amongst / experienced by people living in Durrës, Tirana, and Vlora districts rather than those who live in Korça and Shkodra. This could be as a result of the mixed population, with new residents who came after '90s in Tirana, Durrës, and Vlora. Furthermore, both Durrës and Vlora cities have ports which create a different dynamic; while Shkodra and Korça are more traditional areas and are somehow more practitioners of religion. Based on community's statements, the most prevalent type of domestic violence is the emotional abuse, followed by the psychological one. Both these types are perceived as "less severe," more common and acceptable, and quite impossible to be avoided in the everyday life; therefore less likely to be reported. Less people have stated to have experienced physical violence and even less said they had experienced sexual violence. Both these types of violence are perceived as being "more severe," but, due to social stigma, they are again less likely to be reported. However there are more chances for people to report physical and sexual abuse rather than emotional and psychological abuse.

The most vulnerable groups affected by domestic violence include:

- Children; due to their vulnerability and parental mentality about the acceptance of violence;
- Women; due to their limited physical power, dominated masculine mentality, and lack of opportunities for economic independence;
- Elderly people; mainly victims of economic exploitation from their children;
- Families living in poverty;
- Roma and Egyptian community; because domestic violence is perceived not only as an acceptable behaviour, but also the phenomenon is faded by the social discrimination and multiple social-economic problems that these communities face.

Based on official data from the ASP, the perpetrators are mainly men, husbands of the victims, but, there are also few cases of female perpetrators who violated their husbands. There are more cases of parents abusing their children compared to cases of children abusing their parents (the latter mainly occurs when the parents are elderly).

The Albanian government has issued laws and other special legal acts, various strategies, and respective action plans to respond to this phenomenon, and, in general, we might say that the legislative framework is complete. As sanctioned by law, there are various responsible authorities appointed to prevent, address, and combat domestic violence. MOLSAEO is the leading authority at a central level, while local units (municipalities and communes) are the leading authorities for the concrete management of cases at the local level. Even though the Law on Domestic Violence gives a somehow secondary role to the ASP, this authority is very important when it comes to providing the initial response in cases of domestic violence.

The community says it is aware of the effective laws, but they do not have tangible or detailed knowledge about the content. They mostly expect the state to be equipped with laws for domestic violence, similarly to other social problems. The main source of information for the community is the media, mainly TV, and their personal network of friends and family. The urban and rural community perceives the Albanian State Police as the main responsible authority to prevent the phenomenon and support domestic violence victims; followed by the judicial system (courts and prosecutor office).

Even the majority of these five districts' community stated that domestic violence is always unacceptable and should always be reported, the outcome is that the majority of victims prefer to keep it for themselves. Almost one fourth of the victims disclose their incidents, mainly to their family, relatives, and friends. Only few of the victims (4%) report their case to the Police. Usually they are victims of multiple and serious types of domestic violence for a long time.

There are various social, cultural, and psychological factors which inhibit the official reporting of domestic violence incidents. The main barrier is the perceived low degree of severity of the incident. The victims who usually experience emotional and/or psychological abuse tend to tolerate and justify the incident; therefore they don't officially report it. The second main barrier is the attitude of the victims that such issue should be a family matter only (to be discussed and solved within the family). And the third main barrier preventing people from reporting is the victim's hope for the incident to be a single and isolated one. Furthermore, the community itself is less likely to promote the official reporting of such phenomenon to the Police, despite the level of trustworthiness to this authority.

The main elements that trigger official reporting of domestic violence cases include the high risk of own and/or their family members' lives; the assurance that effective protection measures like EPOs / POs and supportive services for the victims such as sheltering, employment, etc. are in place.

Taking into consideration the low degree of reporting vs. the prevalence of the domestic violence phenomenon, various authorities such as MOLSAEO, municipalities, NPOs have undertaken, time after time, awareness raising activities as individual or joint initiatives with other authorities, including the Police. Based on ASP data, there is a progressive trend of official reported cases during the last years all over the country, which might be the result of legal measures and awareness raising activities. Regardless of such progress, the rural and northern areas have the lowest level of reporting.

The majority of the urban and rural community of the five districts acknowledges Police as the most trustworthy authority to report domestic violence incidents. This can be explained by the dominant positive image that the community has about ASP in general, as an authority which provides protection, peace, order, security, and implementation of laws through devoted police officers, who are always standing by, are communicative and respected by the community.

Some of the main duties of the Albanian State Police in regard to domestic violence include the establishment of special structures and training of the staff, response to any case of domestic violence, inform and support the victims, and support other authorities like prosecutor's office or bailiff's office accordingly. However, victims of domestic violence and the community believe that in such cases the police should provide more services such as sheltering, employment, etc. which actually go beyond the competencies and legal responsibilities of ASP. The low awareness of the community on the responsible authorities - municipalities and communes, to address the domestic violence cases, the evident presence of police in the community, their trust to the blue uniforms and the 24 / 7 service availability, make Police the authority which hosts most of the cases of domestic violence and in the most crucial moment of the situation. As some people stated, there are cases when police acts as a 'punisher,' such as in cases of demonstrations, breaking of traffic rules, etc. and all these make people have hard feelings about the police and negatively influence their opinion on the latter.

According to the statements of both the community and institutions who participated in this study, Police is effective and successful in fulfilling its role and legal responsibilities. Furthermore, Police provides good interagency cooperation and satisfactory support to the victims by making use of its own strengths, such as the total coverage of the territory, well-organized structure for domestic violence, clear predefined responsibilities, and duties at each level of ASP, devoted, committed, altruist, and courageous police officers with good knowledge on the topic who are continuously trained and have well-established links with the community.

Again, the broader role the community expects from the Police pointed out at various current uncovered needs of ASP in terms of human, logistic, financial resources, and infrastructure. It is necessary to review the number of employees dealing with domestic violence and the range of their duties and responsibilities; to keep stable experts in certain positions and have gender balanced staff, provide on-going trainings, improve the infrastructure and internal organization of premises, increase of logistic resources and technological equipments, increase of budget allocated to the services and preventive, awareness raising activities, etc. for domestic violence.

As sanctioned by Law, Police is one of the responsible authorities when it comes to domestic violence and, for it to be effective, there is need that each and every authority fulfils its own duties and responsibilities, and there is also need for good interagency cooperation and partnership with the community. Line ministries, local government, NPOs, and the judicial system recognize the Police as a key stakeholder in the first and direct contact with the

victims of domestic violence. They describe the cooperation with the Police as satisfactory in terms of reporting, exchange of statistics, immediate response for support when asked, participation in awareness raising activities, etc. Moreover, they underline the big efforts of the Police to maximize the impact in reducing the phenomenon, despite their limited resources.

Police acknowledges this willingness of other authorities to cooperate. However, police officers have some reserves in regard to the implementation of duties and responsibilities, as sanctioned by the law, by other authorities when it comes to properly and timely responding to victims of domestic violence. Some of the concerns, which inevitably influence the case management quality and also the effectiveness of the police, are related to time limitation of current existing services (i.e. help lines, working hours of public authorities); partial geographical coverage of the country with services from other institutions (i.e. shelters); partial implementation of duties and role from other authorities (i.e. establishment of the cross-referral system in each local unit, execution of POs / EPOs from bailiff's offices, employment); lack of service provision (i.e. sheltering for 48 hours until an EPO is issued, free legal assistance in case of divorce of the victims, rehabilitation programs for perpetrators); within the context of limited human and financial capacities many responsible authorities have, especially in municipalities and communes.

On the other hand, the cooperation and partnership with the community is one of the priorities of ASP, which has adopted the model of community policing as the overarching component to its strategy 2007-2013. Police makes efforts to establish and maintain bonds with the urban and rural community, especially through zone inspectors. However the partnership with the community remains a challenge due to limited human, logistic, and financial resources of ASP to organize massive awareness raising activities with the community; indifferent community and diligent importance is not given to this phenomenon by the whole society.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and conclusions of the study, also taking into consideration the need for prevention and reduction of domestic violence, lead to the following recommendations, which are focused on the activities with the community, Albanian State Police, and interagency cooperation.

Activities with the community

To raise the awareness of the community on domestic violence laws, on the responsible authorities (MOLSAEO, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Justice, Local Authorities, Judicial System) and their role as sanctioned by the law, on domestic violence reporting procedures (where and how), on protection measures, on supportive services for the victims and perpetrators, etc.

To promote human rights, with special focus on children, women and minorities' rights; to communicate about the phenomenon and various types of domestic violence; to increase self-confidence of the community in order to increase official reporting of domestic violence.

These activities should be conducted by the Police and other relevant authorities by regularly visiting schools and having seminars with pupils, preparing and delivering informative and awareness raising brochures, other activities in the media which promote positive practices and successful management of domestic violence cases. Such activities should be considered as a priority in specific zones and communities, which display low level of awareness and reporting of the phenomenon, such as rural and northern areas, Roma and Egyptian community.

Albanian State Police

Improve public image of police by strengthening the bonds with the community, by relying on the positive aspects, promptness, and services that the State Police provides to the community in general and especially for cases of domestic violence; and on the professionalism, impartiality, and ethics of employees as well..

To raise awareness on the real role of the Police and its effectiveness through:

- Increased visibility and presence of the police in the media (TV and radio programs, articles in newspapers and magazines). Thus, the role of the police in response to domestic violence will be introduced properly and accurately, by ensuring the adequate distribution of information to the audience. Taking into consideration that TV is the medium with highest audience and the main source of information, it is advisable to establish agreements with National and Local TV stations to occasionally allocate TV airtime for the Police and domestic violence issues.
- Development of a web link within the ASP official website to provide detailed, tangible, and practical information, advices about domestic violence, promote the role of the police, and provide other useful information regarding services in place, by aiming at the youth as a core target group, since they are the main users of internet and good conveyers of information too.
- Activities within police commissariats by inviting the community, representatives of different institutions and organizations in special events aimed at introducing the role, innovations, and achievement of the Police.

In line with some future plans of ASP, such as the increase of the numbers of female police officers, the review of the current domestic violence structure based on the dynamics of each area, on-going training of the staff, it is recommendable they take into consideration the review of human resources (number, profile, range of duties and responsibilities); re-organize internal premises of police commissariats to establish more special rooms for individual interviewing of victims and at the same time child-friendly ones; improve infrastructure and increase of financial and logistic resources (transportation, equipments, administrative resources); and use latest technology.

To provide on-going training and qualifications to all police officers who deal with domestic violence, especially to police officers who work directly with the victims (operational room 129, patrols, zone inspectors, and experts on crime prevention and investigation). Training should include up-to-date knowledge about legislative and procedural changes, interviewing techniques, cycle of domestic violence, increase of understanding about the needs and viewpoints of victims (to avoid re-victimization) and increase knowledge on available resources (to provide better information to victims).

Interagency cooperation

Systematically organize joint trainings with the employees of various institutions who deal with domestic violence (police, municipality, court, prosecution, bailiff's office, schools, healthcare centres, media, NPOs, etc.) focused on legislative changes, new structures, etc. This would support the increase of awareness on the role of each stakeholder; reaching a common understanding about the concerns and perspectives of each-other; as well as strengthening the cooperation.

Each and every authority responsible for domestic violence should undertake and fulfil its role and duties as foreseen by law: to establish the necessary services for the domestic violence victims and to ensure proper and accurate services; to establish the cross-referral system for domestic violence cases in all municipalities; to have a functional and effective cross-referral system in the municipalities where such system is in place; to re-organize human capacities and other resources in order to fulfil the given role by law.

To further strengthen the interagency cooperation and coordination through: regular meetings, continuous exchange of information about the cases, coordination, and uniformity of the current data collection system on domestic violence that is used by different institutions.

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APPENDIX

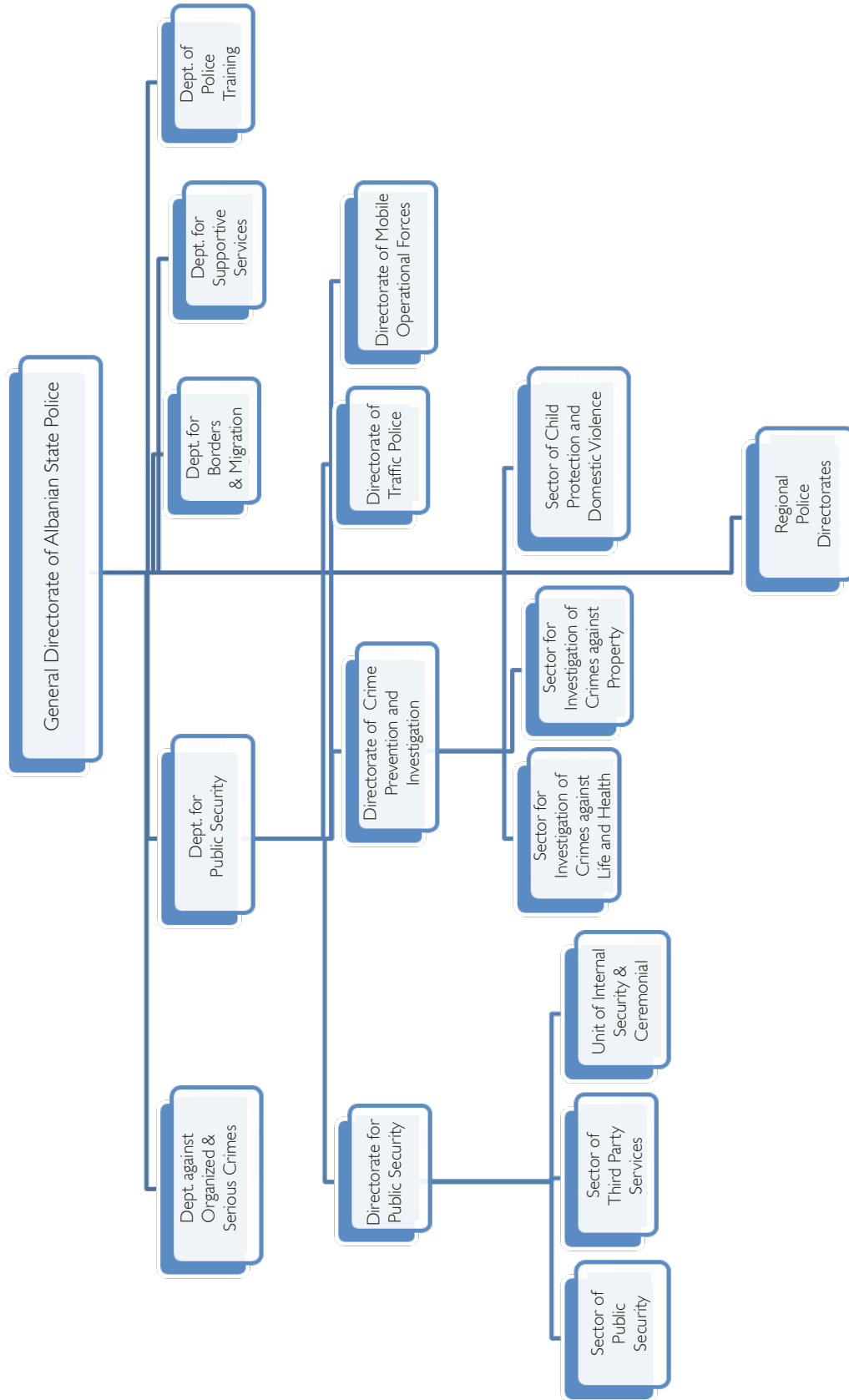
APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FROM VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND NPOs DURING THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Institution / NPOs	Name of the participant	Position
Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	Alida Tota	Director for Equal Opportunities and Family Policies
Ministry of Justice	Marsela Mezini	Inspector at the Directorate of Legal Organization and Inspection
Ministry of Justice	Agim Bega	Director of Legal Organization and Inspection
Ministry of Health	Luiza Alushi	Expert of the reproductive health sector in the Department of Public Health
Ministry of Health	Erol Çomo	Head of the Family Health Care Section – Directorate of Public Health
Municipality of Durrës	Aurora Hyka	Gender equality and domestic violence expert, in the Department of Social Services
Municipality of Korça	Elizeta Vando	Senior Expert for the Protection from Domestic Violence, Directorate of Social Assistance
Municipality of Shkodra	Jeta Xhabiaj	Senior Expert for the protection from domestic violence at the Sector for Culture, Arts and Sports
Municipality of Vlora	Rezarta Andoni	Senior Expert for the protection from domestic violence in the Directorate of Social Support
District Court of Tirana	Alkelina Gazidede	Civil judge
District Court of Tirana	Bujana Tonçica	Press spokesperson
District Court of Shkodra	Arbër Çela	Civil judge

District Court of Vlora	Ervin Trashi	Civil judge
Prosecution of Tirana	Marjeta Zaimi	Vice Prosecutor
The National Shelter (Kamza)	Redinela Azizaj	Commanded Director in the Shelter of Kamza
Centre / Shelter "Vatra" (Vlora)	Valbona Avdullai	Project Coordinator for the trafficked and violated women
ALO 116	Belioza Çoku	Coordinator
ALO 116	Gjergji Xhaholli	Supervisor of the Children's Counselling Line
"Sot për të ardhmen" (Durrës)	Viola Çikalleshi	Director
"Sot për të ardhmen" (Durrës)	Menada Petro	Social worker for domestic violence programme
"Gruaja tek gruaja" (Shkodër)	Trëndelina Boriçi	Coordinator
"Hapat e lehtë" (Shkodër)	Arlinda Kaca	Psychologists
"Hapat e lehtë" (Shkodër)	Luljeta Alibali	Social worker
Kennedy Foundation (Korça)	Voltisa Furxhi	Domestic Violence Coordinator between the Municipality and Foundation, and Leader of the Shelter for violated women
"Gruaja Korçare" (Korçë)	Klara Çelo	Head of the association
UNICEF	Floriana Hima	Project officer; Child, Youth and Family Protection Programme
UNDP	Ermira Shkurti	Program manager; Gender Joint Programme
UNDP	Elona Dine	Project officer; Gender Joint Programme
Association of Women with Social Problems (Durrës)	Bajana Çeveli	Executive director
Association of Women with Social Problems (Durrës)	Rezarta Agolli	Attorney
Centre for Legal Civic Initiatives	Jonida Gezka	Lawyer
The Center of Integrated Legal Practices and Services	Enkelejda Bakia	Coordinator
ProLGBT	Erjon Tela	Accountant

Human Rights in Democracy Centre	Afërdita Prroni	Director
Human Rights in Democracy Centre	Jenna Peppenelli	Intern
Terre des hommes	Eva Dauti	Legal and advocacy officer
Useful to Albanian Women	Sevim Arbana	President
Useful to Albanian Women	Migena Mollanji	Gender activists
World vision	Dea Haxhi	Project manager
World vision	Jona Dogani	Child protector
Amaro Drom	Skënder Veliu	Executive director
Association for the Balkan-Egyptian Community	Behar Sadiku	Chairman

APPENDIX B: RANKS WITHIN ASP INTERVIEWED DURING THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH



The interviewed employees within the General Police Directorate belong to the departments / directorates / sectors marked in red colour.

The interviewed employees within Regional Police Directories belong to the Section of Child Protection and Domestic Violence.

The interviewed employees in Police Commissariats in the main centres of the districts belong to the Section of Crime Prevention and Investigation. They were: head of section, crime investigation experts, and zone inspectors.

